

How Do Evolving Kava Related Practices
Impact the Role of Tongan Women Living in Aotearoa?

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Abstract

The purpose of this doctoral research was to gather the participants' experiences with kava-related practices (KRP) and contribute to the existing body of research on kava by augmenting the female voice and disseminating their experience and understanding of KRP. By doing so, this doctoral research will benefit individuals working within our Pacific community by fostering cultural understanding of this traditional cultural practice and areas in which it has evolved. Furthermore, this doctoral research will be of value to community members who hold an interest in KRP and seek to gain insights into others' experiences within this realm. It will provide a broader understanding of diverse perspectives surrounding KRP.

A kakala framework utilising qualitative methods, with talanoa and tauhi vā methodological approaches ensured this doctoral research aligned with Pacific values and world views. Talanoa and tauhi vā together were found to strengthen the relationship between participant and researcher by prioritising the relationship through mutual respect, and genuine positive regard. Individual talanoa combined with talanoa faka'eke'eke (formal/direct) was effective in extracting specific information in a semi-structured format. Data was extracted through thematic analysis where patterns and themes were identified that linked to KRP.

The results show that despite opposition, women will continue to consume kava and will not allow others to devalue them or their right to do engage in KRP. The benefits of kava consumption have been highlighted by female and male kava consumers who believe it can improve their physical, spiritual, and mental health. Tou'a identified feeling valued and honoured when she was serving in a traditional setting where cultural protocols were adhered to. When tou'a are paid, and cultural protocols not adhered to, it can lead to inappropriate relationships. This included sexual objectification of the tou'a, and the tou'a being placed in a vulnerable position. This has led to the tou'a role being devalued in the community and the tou'a status being one of disrepute. Participants talked about the fears, they have regarding the tou'a and believe it is necessary to implement protection for the tou'a. This may be in the form of education.

Education plays a crucial role not only in empowering men to understand and respect the role of the tou'a and her self-worth in KRP, but also in challenging the perception that kava is solely a male commodity and can only be consumed by men. By educating individuals, both men and women, about the evolving roles of women in KRP, a shift can occur towards a

more inclusive and accepting environment. This broader understanding will help dispel the notion that women's participation in the kava setting is limited to serving and being visually appealing. Instead, it will foster a deeper appreciation for the diverse contributions and capabilities of women within the realm of kava, promoting gender equality and empowerment.

Dedication and Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I acknowledge my God (the eternal father), Jesus Christ (my saviour) and the Holy Ghost (my comforter) with whom nothing is impossible. I trusted in the Lord to guide me through this journey and every day I sought His direction. This PhD process is where He led me.

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'Ofa lahi atu

Prelude

Embarking on this research has been an epic journey with multi-layered learning opportunities interwoven with multifaceted influences from diverse sources. The research itself is filled with controversial yet informative content. It opens a dialogue on previously private material and celebrates the long-held traditions of the Tongan people. The context within which this research is held falls solely on the researcher and her intricately balancing the experiences of the participants as she weaves their narratives to create a literary garland. If one could imagine a beautiful exquisite kakala (garland) woven with a mixture of beautiful flowers, fruits, and wood, but included are delicate thistles, thorns, kava root fragments, and blessed with a prayer of faith, then this would sum up this doctoral research and its design.

The purpose of sharing this reflection is to offer the reader a glimpse into the author's personal journey throughout the research process. While the experience has been profoundly enriching and rewarding, it has also presented numerous obstacles that could have potentially hindered the progress of the research. However, driven by a deep sense of purpose, the author remained steadfast and resilient, ultimately accomplishing the creation of this doctoral research. This journey can be likened to the formation of a kakala, where resilience and determination are essential in weaving together the intricate threads of knowledge and understanding.

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“I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.”

Signed:

Date: October 18, 2022

Chapter 1. Introduction

*“The world of our ancestors was a large sea full of places to explore,
to make their homes in, to breed generations of seafarers like themselves.”*

- Epli Hau'ofa (1994, Pg. 153)

-

This doctoral research is situated in the field of public health and seeks to investigate the factors that influence Tongan women involved in kava-related practices (KRP) within their communities in Aotearoa. By exploring these dynamics, the research seeks to provide valuable insights into the experiences of the participants, fostering a deeper understanding of their unique perspectives. Through this understanding, this doctoral research intends to promote awareness and knowledge about the involvement of Tongan women in KRP, contributing to the broader understanding of this cultural practice.

This chapter provides an overview of the Pacific peoples, their migration to Aotearoa, and their current demographic representation in the region. The establishment of strongholds by migrant families in Tamaki Makaurau during the 1950s has contributed to a gradual increase in the Pacific population, resulting in a predominantly young population with a growing number of individuals born in Aotearoa. However, this population growth has led to challenges, particularly regarding accommodation shortages, which have resulted in overcrowding and subsequent health issues among Pacific families.

As the Tongan population in Aotearoa continues to rise, there has been a decline in the usage and prevalence of the Tongan language. This highlights the growing importance of activities that foster a connection between the younger Tongan population and their cultural heritage such as KRP. This chapter explores the historical background and traditions surrounding KRP, providing some insights into the cultural significance and evolution of KRP, from its inception to contemporary consumption patterns.

The socio-economic determinants affecting Pacific peoples, particularly in the areas of health and housing conditions, have a profound impact on the preservation of Tongan culture, language, and traditional practices, including those related to kava. Given the influence of tradition on culture and current practices, it is inevitable that some women will continue to partake in kava consumption as they uphold their perceptions of their cultural traditions.

1.1 Background Context

The underlying theme throughout this research is how Tongan women living in Aotearoa are managing the roles they play in their everyday lives and in this case, the relationships they have with Kava Related Practices (KRP). To explain this effect, it is necessary to provide some background context beginning with how Pacific peoples are described in the context of Aotearoa through to Tongan-specific context. This enables this doctoral research, to begin with, a solid foundation upon which it builds and layers the current research information.

1.1.1 Pacific Islanders or Pacific Peoples

When naming or identifying peoples who are from the Pacific, there are terms that may be easily recognised to describe them, which include Pasifika, Pacific Islanders, PI, Pasefika, or Polynesians/Melanesians/Micronesians. In this research, the term Pacific peoples refers to a dynamic and diverse group of people who identify as Pacific persons through ancestry or heritage and hail from Polynesia, Melanesia, or Micronesia (Ministry for Pacific Peoples, 2018). As you will read in this doctoral research there are many references made to connect with others and what links us as opposed to what separates us. Epeli Hau'ofa work challenges the prevailing Western perspective that presents the Pacific islands as small and isolated entities in a vast ocean. He critically questions the idea of imaginary boundaries that confine and separate these islands, reducing them to mere "islands in the sea" (Hau'ofa, 1994, p. 153). He further explains that from a Tongan perspective, they view those habituating other islands as *'people from the sea'* as opposed to the Western term that would see them as *'people from the outer islands'* (Hau'ofa, 1994, p. 153). The ocean does not separate or isolate us from one another, it is what enables us to connect over vast bodies of water. The sea is home to many who live in the Pacific, it is their food source, transportation, and a place that brings families together as they gather their food and socialise when they can.

The term Pacific peoples is used to express the importance of the connections Pacific peoples have and search for with one another as opposed to Pacific Islanders which may imply, we are separated or disconnected from one another because of the ocean. Pacific peoples do not see themselves as individuals, but as an integral part of a greater entity they co-exist with including their tupu'anga (ancestors), the environment, families, communities, and society (Thomsen, Tavita, & Levi-Teu, 2018). When people of the Pacific migrate to other countries, they will migrate to other family members and source ways to fund other family members to join them in their new country (Auckland Council Plan, 2022). The connections from the Pacific to other countries are strong as many Pacific peoples are migrating to other regions in the Pacific including Aotearoa. This is evident as we see an ever-growing Pacific population in Aotearoa that is predicted to exceed 500,000 by 2031 (Stats NZ, 2021).

1.1.2 The Pacific Population in Aotearoa

There are currently 381,640 Pacific peoples residing in Aotearoa making up 8.1% of the total population of Aotearoa, with 75.7% of that population located in Tamaki Makaurau (Stats NZ, 2018). For many Pacific peoples, Aotearoa is an appealing place to migrate to as it provides work opportunities and reconnection with family who may have previously migrated. As identified by the participants, education, health, love, religion, lifestyle, and family duty are also factors that lead to migration. According to Pareti (2015), 18% of the Tuvalu and Kiribati population state climate change as a factor for migration. Pareti further states that the Pacific nations are bearing the impact of climate change which has a global impact on all nations as migration impacts the nations of origin, transition, and destination. As of 2020, there are 17 identified Pacific ethnicities in Aotearoa which include: Cook Islands Māori, Fijian, Hawaiian, Indigenous Australian, Kiribati, Nauruan, Niuean, Ni Vanuatu, Papua New Guinean, Pitcairn Islander, Rotuman, Samoan, Solomon Islander, Tahitian, Tokelauan, Tongan, and Tuvaluan (Ministry for Pacific peoples, 2020). Previously the Cook Island population was the second largest Pacific group in Aotearoa however, we can see by the following statistics, that Tongans are now the second largest Pacific group in Aotearoa: Samoan (47.9%), Tongan (21.6%), Cook Islands Māori (21.1%), Niuean (8.1%), Fijian (5.2%), Tokelauan (2.3%), Tuvaluan (1.2%), i-Kiribati (0.8%), Tahitian (0.5%) and Papua New Guinean (0.3%) (Ministry for Pacific Peoples, 2020). The Pacific population will continue to grow with the majority being born in Aotearoa and schemes such as the Immigration's Samoa Quota Scheme (SAS) which utilises a ballot system and enables 1,100 Samoa citizens and their families to gain residency in Aotearoa each year (Tanielu & Johnson, 2014). This will ensure a steady addition to the workforce in Aotearoa whilst maintaining strong connections between Aotearoa and Samoa. Tonga has the 2003 Pacific Access Category (PAC) that supports a small number of the Tongan population to emigrate annually. Other schemes such as the Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) were set up by immigration in Aotearoa that would enable seasonal workers from the Pacific region to gain short-term visas to support the shortfall of labourers in the horticultural and viticulture areas (Tanielu & Johnson, 2014). In 2016 the main driving force for employment amongst Pacific peoples was the construction and utility industries (Pasefika Proud, 2016).

According to Stats NZ (2018), 49.7% of Pacific peoples are in full-time employment with 19.9% in the labour industry, followed by 13.8% who are professionals. In recent times it has been acknowledged the significant contribution the Pacific community has made through political, sporting, economic, cultural, and social developments that influence a diverse workforce and the identity of Pacific peoples born in Aotearoa (Thomsen, Tavita, & Levi-Teu, 2018).

1.1.3 The Health and Wellbeing of the Pacific Population in Aotearoa

The Ministry for Pacific Peoples (2020b), states that Pacific peoples have an optimistic perception regarding their health with 79.5% reporting their health to be good, very good, or excellent. Their positive perception of health aligns with overall improved health markers. The Ministry of Health (2018) 'Ala Mo'ui progress report show positive results with Pacific peoples having better outcomes than the general population when it comes to mental health services and assessed cardiovascular risk. According to Malo (2000), Pacific people's recovery from mental health issues was largely due to the support from their family, a spiritual belief, and their personal strengths and motivation. These factors were enhanced for those accessing mental health services when they had staff who were culturally competent and could connect with the client through their culture by having an authentic understanding of the importance of family, and spirituality (Malo, 2000).

While there has been a decrease in psychological distress among the Pacific community, there are still areas of concern regarding the health and well-being of Pacific peoples. Despite positive improvements in various aspects, such as overall psychological distress, it is observed that Pacific peoples continue to experience higher rates of diabetes and rheumatic fever compared to the general population (Ministry of Health, 2018).

Housing is a major issue for the Pacific peoples. Homeownership has decreased while immigration is increasing, and not enough housing is available leading to more people sharing one dwelling (Tanielu & Johnson, 2014). Ehinz (n.d.) suggests that Pacific peoples who are living in Aotearoa are more likely to be at risk of environmental hazards due to household crowding, disproportionately low incomes, and the urban environment. According to Manatū Aorere (n.d.) over 300,000 Pacific peoples reside in Tamaki Makaurau. Pacific peoples are experiencing a notable decline in home ownership, which exacerbates housing inequities and imposes a burden on their communities (Stats NZ, 2023). Currently 45% of Pacific children under the age of 16 are in crowded housing and results in 25% of hospital admissions of Pacific adults and children for infectious diseases (Pasefika Proud, 2016). According to Stats NZ (2018) Pacific peoples face a disproportionate burden of significant housing issues, primarily stemming from inadequate financial resources to meet their daily needs. This disparity is notable when comparing the proportion of Pacific peoples who struggle to afford adequate housing with the corresponding proportion in the general population facing similar challenges.

Nevertheless, there are plans in place to alleviate the housing crisis in the Pacific community. The Ministry for Pacific Peoples has developed an initiative that will utilise government funding to build affordable homes for the Pacific peoples whilst creating more employment opportunities for the Pacific workforce needed to build the homes (Ministry for Pacific Peoples, 2018).

With the general well-being of Pacific peoples making positive gains in many areas, there are still factors that negatively impact their daily lives which include financial pressures. Sourcing additional

income for the family is a necessity for many families. As this doctoral research will show, the disproportionately lower income is a factor in why more Tongan women may seek the role of a *tou'a* to provide a much-needed income for their family.

1.1.4 A Young Pacific Population Born in Aotearoa

The Pacific population is younger than the general population with a median age of 23.4 years, and over 66% of the Tongan population in Aotearoa are born in Aotearoa (Stats NZ, 2018). With more Pacific people born in Aotearoa, their culture or understanding of what their culture is will be predominantly influenced by the environments they are immersed in. This will influence who they connect with, and eventually who they will create families with. This will increase the number of interracial marriages or parenthood as almost one-third of the Pacific population identify with other ethnicities outside of the Pacific group (Pasefika Proud, 2016). This statistic is higher in the 0-29 age range where 81% identify with Pacific/Māori, 68% Pacific/European, and 62% Pacific Asian (Ministry for Pacific Peoples, 2020).

The home environment a young person is placed in impacts all facets of their lives, and this can hinder their healthy development. According to Fa'alili-Fidow et.al. (2016), economic deprivation for the Pacific population who live in urban settings can see young Pacific students attending low-decile schools, worrying about having enough food to eat and having to sleep in a room that is not designed for a bedroom. Pacific children aged 2-14 are more active than the general population however, they have a larger body size, have less sleep, eat more fast food, go without breakfast, and eat less fruit and vegetables (Ministry for Pacific Peoples, 2020). When it comes to mental health concerns, research findings indicate that Pacific youth are less inclined than non-Māori and non-Pacific populations to seek professional assistance for mental health concerns. This observation suggests the possibility of unmet needs within the Pacific community (Simpson et.al., 2017).

Nevertheless, there has been significant improvements for this young population. According to Fa'alili-Fidow et.al., (2016), improvements have been noted in better health, life satisfaction, decreased depressive symptoms, and a greater desire to achieve academically. The young Pacific population has improved relationships with family and school; implement healthier behaviours around sexual activity, driving, and substance use; and experiences lower levels of personal violence and sexual abuse and coercion (Fa'alili-Fidow et.al., 2016). Ensuring a better future for this young population begins at home and then in the wider community. The environment a young person is placed in is crucial to enhancing the future of this rising generation. Connecting with and developing relationships with others is important to Pacific peoples.

For many young Pacific peoples, religious and spiritual connections through cultural centres such as churches, are fundamental in helping a young Pacific person to develop and maintain their identity (Fa'alili-Fidow et.al., 2016). Currently 67.9% of the Pacific population have a religious affiliation

(Stats NZ, 2018). Living in the city can be expensive for many Pacific families and maintaining close familial relationships and connections to their church is important to many Pacific peoples (Fa'alili-Fidow et.al., 2016). To ensure stability and healthier futures for the Pacific youth, structures need to be in place to enhance their opportunities to achieve success in whatever field they choose. Utilising a cultural framework to develop individual skills, and implementing programs and interventions will increase the opportunity for young Pacific to achieve success by creating their solutions, and being proud of who they are (Fa'alili-Fidow et.al., 2016). As a young rising generation, the Pacific peoples will play a critical role in policy making that will help shape the future of Aotearoa. This is due to their unwavering desire to honour their Pacific values, connecting with past, present, and future that fosters a sense of belonging, and the innovative ways Pacific peoples have of finding solutions that keep the community together despite the obstacles they may face (Ministry for Pacific Peoples, 2021).

1.1.5 The Tongan Diaspora in Aotearoa

There is a steady increase in the Tongan population in Aotearoa with a 20% increase between 2006-2013 (Pasefika Proud, 2016). This steady increase has seen the Tongan population in 2018 become the second-largest Pacific group in Aotearoa (Ministry for Pacific peoples, 2020). Immigration schemes in Aotearoa such as the 2003 Pacific Access Category (PAC) provide for 250 Tongan citizens and their families to be granted residency in Aotearoa each year (Tanielu & Johnson, 2014). Migration and other factors have led to the increase of the Tongan population in Aotearoa. These include reuniting of families, economic opportunities, healthcare, social and cultural connections, and improved living conditions. The growth of the Tongan population can also be attributed to natural increase as more Tongan families have children who are born and raised in New Zealand. Overall, a combination of migration, social connections, and natural increase has contributed to the increase in the Tongan population in New Zealand. As of 2018, there were 82,389 Tongans in Aotearoa with a median age of 20.5 years (Stats NZ, 2018).

In the mid-1900s when immigrants arrived from the Pacific to supply the labour shortages, Pacific communities were established in Te Rimu Tahī (Ponsonby), and other inner-city suburbs where job opportunities and cheaper housing were available (Auckland Council 2022; Blair, 2013). Since then, the Pacific population has moved south with one-third of the Pacific population living in Tamaki Makaurau ki te Tonga (South Auckland), one-third across the rest of Tamaki Makaurau, and one-third across the rest of Aotearoa (Tanielu & Johnson, 2014). According to Pasefika Proud (2016), the Tongan communities are more populated in the Tamaki Makaurau local boards of Mangere-Otahuhu, Otara-Papatoetoe and Maungakiekie areas (Ministry for Pacific peoples, 2020). As of 2020, 64.4% of Tongans were born in Aotearoa, with 87% of those aged under 29 years of age (Stats NZ, 2018). This makes for a young Tongan population.

Pacific communities are built around the family, church, and village (Macpherson, 2011). Seven out of ten Pacific peoples are affiliated with Christian belief systems (Pasefika Proud, 2016). Over 80% of the Tongan population residing in Aotearoa have a religious or Christian affiliation (Ministry for Pacific peoples, 2020). All participants involved in this doctoral research have indicated a religious affiliation and place significant importance on spirituality in their lives. Church membership is a way of connecting with other members of the Pacific community and may provide support to their members when needed. During the COVID-19 pandemic, church communities played a vital role in informing their members of what the COVID-19 vaccine was and how it worked so that the Pacific community could make an informed decision about vaccination. Church facilities provided a space where vaccinations could take place and, in an environment that was supportive of Pacific cultural needs. Through accessing these services within the church environment, healthcare workers needed to be culturally competent to ensure they employ best practice skills. Cultural competence does not simply mean speaking the language, it means being able to ask the right questions and gather information to help the worker understand the Tongan person's perspective and the way they view the world. Although some may say there could be a language barrier, the Ministry for Pacific peoples (2020b), report that there is a significant decrease in the Tongan language with the majority (more than 70%) residing in Aotearoa unable to converse in Tongan.

1.1.6 A Decline in the Tongan Language in Aotearoa

As the Pacific population increases, certain predictors forecast what this population may look like in the future. For example, there is a decline in the Pacific languages, especially amongst the Tongan population in the age group of 55-65. This age group would have been the children of the Tongan group that came to Aotearoa in the 1950s-1970s. Being an immigrant to Aotearoa in the 1950s, the researcher's mother was motivated to assimilate into this new culture which meant for her that part of her Tongan culture including the language was somewhat neglected as she embraced this new pālagi (European) lifestyle. This combined with interracial marriage, very little Tongan was spoken in the home due to the matriarch wanting to ensure her children had a good command of the English language first. This may be a contributing factor as to why the Tongan language declined for that population at that time. Assimilation into a new culture, pressure to speak the English language for work opportunities, and the increase of interracial marriages. Currently 90% of all Tongans speak English (Stats NZ, 2018). According to the Ministry for Pacific peoples (2020b), the highest group of Tongan speakers are in the 15-24 age range which makes a considerable contribution to the 35,820 Tongans who are fluent in their mother tongue. In the past five years, the Tongan language has had the highest increase however, it has continued to decline regarding retaining the language (Ministry for Pacific Peoples, 2020). In the 2018 Census, data showed that only 12% of Tongans under the age of 15 were proficient in speaking the Tongan language, representing a decline of 9% since 2006. However, if predictors are utilised, it may be conceivable that there will be an increase in those who

speak Tongan in the future as the 15–24-year-old group have families of their own and pass on their language to their children. The preservation of the Tongan language among Tongan children in Aotearoa requires a concerted effort to facilitate language transmission within the Tongan community. According to Taumoefolau (2020) this endeavour heavily relies on the willingness of Tongan parents and adults to actively use the language in their homes. This highlights the governmental support in various areas, such as increasing the availability of reading materials, incorporating language instruction in schools, and maximising the benefits of Language Weeks. On the other hand, Tongan parents possess the valuable resource of fluency and can pass on the language to their children. Considering this, it may be beneficial for the government to provide incentives to encourage parents to utilize their language skills effectively (Taumoefolau, (2020).

For the Tongans born in Aotearoa, keeping cultural practices alive is an important component of one's identity. Being surrounded by men and women who are fluent in their language and have a wealth of knowledge about their culture has proven to be valuable for the younger Tongan population who are involved in KRP. Language plays a key role in maintaining and preserving traditions and rituals within a culture. It serves as a vessel through which knowledge, values, beliefs, and customs are conveyed across generations. It enables individuals to engage fully in their cultural practices, maintaining a strong link to their heritage and ensuring the continued vitality of these customs for future generations. KRP is effective in helping young men connect to their culture through faikava (Fehoko, 2015). The relationship between men and KRP has contributed to the motivation to examine the influence of KRP on the roles of Tongan women. This doctoral research will provide information on how culture and KRP are viewed by the Tongan women participants who live in Aotearoa. For many participants, understanding the history of why we have kava and how it is to be used to honour the traditional components of the kava ceremony is an area they have a wealth of knowledge in.

1.2 Kava History and Practices

Kava is an integral part of Tongan culture. It has roots steeped in the mythological realms as do many traditional components of the Tongan culture. In this section, three myths are discussed and how they are interlinked with KRP. Myths and legends are ancient narratives that hold significant cultural and spiritual significance. They serve as traditional explanations for natural phenomena, the origins of the world, and the deeds of gods, heroes, and other mythical beings. These stories are deeply intertwined with religious and cultural beliefs, providing insights into the values, traditions, and worldview of a community or civilisation. According to Mahina (1992) myths and history may be complementary to each other and opposed to some extent. Mahina suggests that Myths are a complex social and psychological phenomenon that reflects people's attitudes towards human beings, and their environment influenced by their social interactions and therefore is a '*socio-psychological reality, it is a historical fact*' (Mahina, 1992).

Myths and legends are significant in passing on an understanding of history and how they encompass or influence the traditions of KRP. The history of kava in Tongan culture dates to the legends of Kava'onau and the sacrifice she and her parents made to honour the Tu'i Tonga; 'Aho'eitu and his father Tagaloa 'Eitumatupu'a; and Faimālie who travelled on the boat to Puluotu.

1.2.1 Myths and Legends

Tekakaromatagi (2014) suggests the Kava'onau possibly predates the Tu'i Tonga and includes the chief Lo'au from Ha'amea and his servant Fevanga from the Island of 'Eueiki. Biersack (1991) attempts to interpret the myth and its relationship with the taumafa kava (Royal kava ceremony). The following quote is taken from Her Royal Highness the Princess Salote Mafile'o Pilolevu of Tonga who recites the legend of Kava'onau on a YouTube video produced by Gary Smith (2011).

"In Tongan mythology, the kava plant has a miraculous origin. It appeared because of the sacrifice and love of a very poor couple for their king the Tu'i Tonga. According to legend, this couple lived alone on the island of 'Eueiki with their little daughter Kava who they cherished but was afflicted with leprosy. One day unexpectedly the king and his fishermen came to the island for rest and refreshment. Hearing of the King's arrival, Kava's father Fevanga anxiously prepared an 'umu (underground oven) to make food for the king. Kava's mother rushed to the garden to harvest the last bit of food they had. A fu'u kape (Giant taro). To her horror, Fefafa found the king resting under the leaves of the kape plant. Unable to approach the King who was considered by the people to be divine, Fefafa returned sorrowfully to her husband. The couple's deep sense of duty left them no choice. Since a food offering had to be made, they offered up their daughter as a sacrifice. Therefore, Kava was put in the 'umu as an offering for the king. When the king heard of this manifestation of ultimate devotion, he immediately left the island before the 'umu could be uncovered. So, it became poor Kava's grave tenderly cared for by Fevanga and Fefafa. Not long after, two strange new plants appeared one at the head and one at the foot of the grave. One was sweet to the taste and one the root was bitter. When the high Chief Lo'au heard this tragic story from the grief-stricken parents of Kava, he told them to bring the strange new plants as an offering for the King the Tu'i Tonga in Lapaha. The plant with the bitter root would henceforth be called 'kava' after the cherished daughter, the other 'tō' or sugar cane. The couple made the presentation to the king as an emblem of their sacrifice. Hence the drink made from the root of the kava became the ceremonial drink of Tonga".

Kava signifies loyalty to the sovereign, love for Tonga, and sacrifice. For foreigners to Tonga, it does not take long for them to learn the importance of kava if they are wanting to assimilate into the Tongan culture. Eric B. Shumway a religious leader for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints lived in Tonga from 1959-1962, and then again from 1986-1989 shared the following in an

interview: “When you take your kava you are making a covenant to be a solid citizen and love the country, support the king, to embrace the qualities that define Tongans mainly love, respect, keeping up good relations, and a willing and ready mind, and a humble heart.” ... “The idea of a kava plant is the symbol of Tongan solidarity, loyalty, fealty, and respect.” (Woods, 2020, p. 84)

According to Biersack (1991), the taumafa kava is central to the polity of Tongan society and kingship. As Queen Sālote stated, it is in these kava rituals that you will find the history of Tongan culture (Bott, 1982). The legend of Kava'onau is often told alongside the legend of 'Aho'eitu. Kava'onau brings an understanding of the creation of the kava plant whereas the legend of 'Aho'eitu is the history of the kingship of the first Tu'i Tonga.

The drinking of the kava is symbolic and reflects the origins of the legend of 'Aho'eitu. In this legend, 'Aho'eitu is the son of the God Tagaloa 'Eitumatupu'a and an earthly mother Va'epopua. When 'Aho'eitu grows up, he asks about his father and his mother tells him his father is Tagaloa 'Eitumatupu'a and says he must climb up the toa (*Casuarina equisetifolia*, "Ironwood") tree into his father's realm if he wants to see him. Determined to meet his father 'Aho'eitu climbs the tree. When they meet for the first time, his father Tagaloa 'Eitumatupu'a is delighted to meet him. Tagaloa 'Eitumatupu'a tells 'Aho'eitu of his other brothers and 'Aho'eitu goes out to meet them. However, all is not well when he introduces himself as their younger brother. They grow to dislike him because of his handsome looks and athletic prowess. They plot to kill him and then they dispose of his body by eating him and then throwing his head and bones into the hoi bush (*Cordyline australis*, commonly known as the cabbage tree). When Tagaloa 'Eitumatupu'a sees what they have done, he makes them retrieve the head and bones and put them in a kumete (kava bowl), then vomit up the remains of 'Aho'eitu into the kumete. Tagaloa 'Eitumatupu'a says that they will witness the power of true love. 'Aho'eitu arises from the kumete and returns to earth. He descends to the earthly realm as the first Tu'i Tonga. Tagaloa 'Eitumatupu'a sends down the older half-brothers of 'Aho'eitu to serve him and his descendants for eternity.

According to Biersack (1991), this legend is interwoven into many aspects of the taumafa kava ceremony. This may begin with the preparation of the kava and the original chewing of the kava and then spitting it into the kava bowl symbolising 'Aho'eitu being eaten by his brothers and then regurgitated into a kumete. It is suggested that the dismembering, devouring, regurgitating, and rebirth of 'Aho'eitu is symbolic of the metamorphosis of 'Aho'eitu through divine intervention and restoration back into the earthly realm in a transformed state (Valeri 1989:224 as cited in Biersack 1991). Thus, connecting the earthly state with the divine nature of the Tu'i Tonga. The ranking of the kava circle members in order of superiority is symbolic of the relationship between 'Aho'eitu and his older siblings. The brothers may have felt they were superior to 'Aho'eitu. However, when he became the first Tu'i Tonga they pledged their allegiance and loyalty to him. Another aspect of this is

understanding that there will be disharmony at times within a kava circle. However, when Tagaloa 'Eitumatupu'a stood over the kumete and said you will see the power of love, the love and loyalty the members of the kava circle have for one another are greater than any feelings of jealousy or animosity (Biersack, 1991). When the kava is ready to be consumed, the drinking of the kava itself is symbolic of the people and the land, the work that is given to produce the kava and rendered through love, loyalty, and sacrifice to the king. *"The ceremonial use of kava focuses on ritual and implied covenant-making. The Tongan word for covenant is fuakava or first covenant. In the case of the investiture of a title, one received his first cup of kava as evidence of his covenant of loyalty to the king, country, and the great Tongan heritage, including the national motto: God and Tonga are my Inheritance. Connected to a marriage, the first cup of kava is evidence of a covenant of loyalty and fidelity between bride and groom (Woods, 2020, p.82).* Traditional KRP is entrenched with specific rituals that encompass the meaning behind each component.

Another myth about kava includes the one of 'Koe talanoa ki he vaka na'e alu ki Pulotu' – 'The boat that went to Pulotu'. This is the myth summarised in this doctoral research of the version told by Edward Winslow Gifford (Gifford, 1924).

Four gods from 'Eua, Haveatoke (Slippery Eel), Fakafu'umaka (Like-a-Big Stone), Ha'e lefeke (Octopus-Comes, or Walking-Octopus), and Lohi (Lie) were paddling their vaka (boat) to Pulotu (a resting place for the deceased chiefs/ the underworld) when they passed an old woman, the goddess Faimālie (Take-Care or Perform-Fortunately). Faimālie called out to the gods to ask where they were going and insisted that she join them despite their protests that she would make the vaka overloaded. She reassured them that she would be of some use to them and would bail the water out if necessary. When they reached Pulotu, the gods transformed themselves and hid in the house of the great goddess Hikule'o (Watching Tail), who ruled Pulotu. When the inhabitants of Pulotu came to the beach and saw the vaka they were curious as to who had arrived in the vaka and speculated it was people from the world. When the people of the village could not find the occupants of the vaka they enlisted the help of Haamatakikila (Those of the Piercing Eyes) who looked everywhere to no avail and admitted defeat. Next, they sought the help of Haafakanamunamu (Those of the Keen Scent) to find the scent of the visitors, but they too were unsuccessful. Next, they required the help of the Guessers who would try and guess where they were hiding but this too was unsuccessful. Finally, they sought the help of the Fa'ahingatelingaongo (Those-of-the-Sharp- Ears) who would use their keen ears to hear any noise that would lead them to the occupants from the vaka. But when they became tired from trying to find the gods they departed. The inhabitants of Pulotu were angry and Hikule'o devised a plan that when the gods revealed themselves, they would have to complete impossible tasks and if they could not finish them, then they would be executed. Hikule'o demanded that the gods from the boat show themselves. As the gods finally revealed themselves, Hikule'o asked several of the people to go and bring a very large piece of kava to drink with the 'Gods from the world'. The kava branch

they returned with was so large that it was compared to the size of a country. Hikule' o said to the gods that they were to drink the kava but, if they could not finish it, then they would be killed. The kava was chewed and then mixed with water that was compared to the size of the sea, and the bowl was compared to the size of the whole of Ha'apai. The gods began to cry because they were not accustomed to kava. Only Faimālie did not cry and remained silent when the kava was strained and served to each of the gods. Each of the four gods drank a full cup and became drunk and unable to drink any more kava.

Faimālie inquired about her companions' well-being and playfully teased them about their inability to consume more kava. She then reminded them of their initial reluctance to bring her along due to concerns about the boat being overloaded, and now she intended to show them why they would be grateful for her presence. Hikule'o questioned why the elderly woman had not consumed any kava, to which she respectfully responded that she would go and drink directly from the bowl. She leaned into the kava bowl and drinking from the middle she drank until all the kava was gone and then she swallowed the bowl, the strainer, and everything else that had been used to supply the kava. This made the inhabitants of Pulotu angry so they made a feast that would be impossible to eat. Each of the first four gods ate all they could but could not finish. Then Faimālie started to eat, and she ate all the yams, pigs, food, leaves, and every item that was used to make the feast until nothing remained.

In their anger, Hikule'o and the chiefs devised a sports competition and issued a challenge to the gods from 'Eua: a surfing contest. The objective was to determine the winner based on who could ride the waves the longest. It was agreed that if the gods from 'Eua lost, all five of them would face execution. The inhabitants of Pulotu were confident in their chosen representative's abilities, but little did they know that Haveatoke possessed exceptional skills in the ocean. After an intense surfing battle, Haveatoke emerged victorious, defeating, and ultimately killing the Pulotu contender. Next was a diving contest where Fakafu'umaka stepped forward to face the diving champion of Pulotu and see who could hold their breath the longest under the water. When the Pulotu's diver ran out of breath Fakafu'umaka restrained him from rising to the surface and killed him.

Increasing in anger, Hikule'o showed the gods the Vī (Spondias dulcis), tree which is so enormous that it filled the whole of Pulotu with its roots, branches, and fruit. The gods were afraid nevertheless Ha'elefeke stepped forth and accepted the challenge that he must catch all the fruit before it falls to the ground, or the five gods will be killed. Using his tentacles, he held the branches in the same direction and encompassed the branches with his tentacles so that he was able to pluck and catch all the fruit. This angered Hikule'o and the chiefs further, so they demanded the gods now eat all the fruit. The four gods were afraid until Faimālie stepped up and ate all the fruit, the leaves, the trunk, and the whole tree! Infuriated, Hikule'o demanded the gods leave and go back to the world they came from as the low-born ones they are.

Therefore, the five gods departed from Pulotu with their lives intact. However, Lohi concealed fish, and taro to take back to 'Eua and Faimālie steals and swallows one of the 'ufi (yams). According to Filihia (2001) when Faimālie returned to the world, she gave birth to the 'ufi (yam) which is known to be the 'choicest' of offerings at the 'inasi (first fruits ceremony). The ō (fish) and taro and both also considered esteemed chiefly food (Filihia, 2001, p 380).

This myth highlights Faimālie's role as a female kava consumer. It was noted that she felt comfortable with the kava while the other gods were unfamiliar with it. She stepped forward while the other four were afraid, and when they consumed it, it did not take much kava to have a strong effect on them. If one is following myths and legends as part of a traditional cultural position, then it is problematic for anyone to question women consuming kava. It is within the cultural realms where myths and legends are retold through kava rituals. It is apparent that goddesses such as Faimālie consumed kava to save the lives of herself and the other gods with her. These myths are all legends of sacrifice, love, commitment, and loyalty. Faimālie and Kava'onau highlight the sacrifices that females have made regarding KRP.

1.2.2 Evolving Kava Related Practices in Aotearoa

Looking at KRP from a female perspective KRP has and is still evolving. In this section, it will begin with the definition of tradition and evolution, and then provide context as to why the three groups of participants – the female kava consumer, the spouse of a male kava consumer, and the tou'a, were specifically sought to contribute the data for this research.

Defining traditional KRP is necessary to establish some form of the baseline and to mark how KRP has evolved for the participants. According to the Oxford dictionary, the definition of tradition is a belief, custom, or way of doing something that has existed for a long time among a particular group of people (Oxford, 2020). Some traditions are embedded with cultural beliefs and understanding, whilst others adapt or evolve to the needs of the situation. There are some traditions, customs, and beliefs we celebrate through generations conveyed with knowledge and passing on information to future generations. Other traditions may be followed without really knowing why. The kava ceremony is steeped in tradition and an integral part of the Tongan culture nevertheless, there will be some kava consumers who do not fully understand or know the history of kava and its related practices. This may be due to how KRP has evolved.

Evolve means 'to develop gradually, or to make someone or something change and develop gradually' (Cambridge, 2020). In this study, the term evolve will apply to how KRP has changed or altered from its traditional use. Evolvement may occur due to unforeseen circumstances such as COVID-19 as some kava group participants have had to adapt to kava group sessions through online zoom sessions, as opposed to meeting in person. This meant the members of the kava group would all individually prepare, serve, and consume the kava in their own space (Ministry for Pacific Peoples, 2020a:

Fehoko, Hafoka, & Arcia Tecun, 2020). Going forward, for some this may become a favourable alternative and their practice of kava may evolve as they now utilise online forums (Ministry for Pacific Peoples, 2020a). Alternatively, KRP may have evolved through an informed decision that those involved have consciously adapted aspects of KRP to meet their specific needs. This may entail sitting in chairs around a table instead of on mats on the floor due to physical limitations, the use of cups in place of leaves to minimise leakage when serving and consuming the kava or paying for a tou'a at a kava club as an alternative to using one of the men present.

This study identifies some of the ways traditional kava has evolved with emphasis placed on how Tongan women perceive the role of women in KRP and how these roles may have evolved. This evolution has happened both in Aotearoa and Tonga. However, because the participants are residing in Aotearoa this research focuses on Aotearoa and the impact experienced by the participants in Aotearoa. The research question itself has undergone minor changes to capture optimal information within this research. Initially, the research inquiry revolved around examining the influence of KRP on the health and well-being of Tongan women. Nevertheless, following the evaluation through the PGR 9 procedure and engaging in discussions with supervisors, it was concluded that the question was too broad. Therefore, it was deemed more advantageous to narrow the focus to a specific aspect, such as investigating the role of Tongan women within KRP.

The question 'How do evolving kava-related practices impact the lives of Tongan women and their perceived role within kava-related practices in Aotearoa' is aimed at a specific demographic to learn from their experience and add in-depth information to a pool of kava research. The personal experiences of Tongan women were sought to highlight how KRP impacts their lives from a multifaceted perspective. Three specific areas are highlighted in this research where participants were sought due to their involvement with KRP through one or more of these areas.

1.2.3 The Female Kava Consumers

With kava consumption on the rise, it is understandable that KRP will gain the attention of members of the wider community and pique the interest of women consuming kava (Port, 2014). This doctoral research explores the various impacts on Tongan women who choose to consume kava. In some Pacific cultures, it is not appropriate for a female to consume kava. Therefore, it was valuable for the research to investigate how the women perceived their role in the practice of kava consumption, and how they felt others saw them in that role. This doctoral research gathered information regarding a woman's choice to consume kava, what are some of the motivating factors that drive her choice, and what is her perception of how her choice influences or impacts other members of her family and the wider community. Through presentations in the community, one particular Tongan woman has been able to share her experience as a kava consumer and what it has been like to be labelled a rebel and instigator of all female kava groups that sometimes include a male tou'a (Ma'u, 2017). Nonetheless,

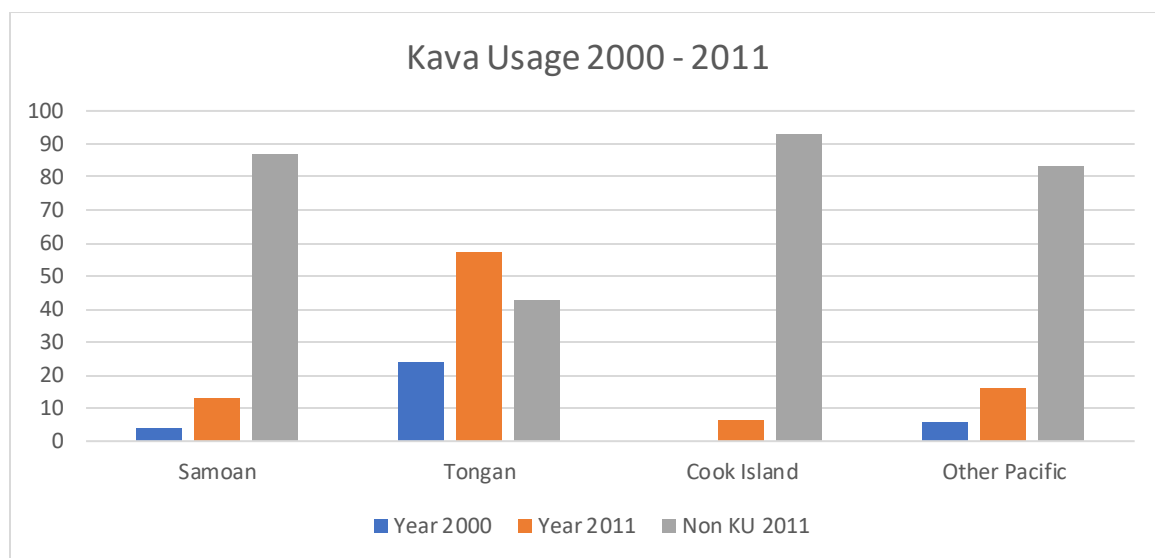
wherever there is opposition there are defenders of women consuming kava or being part of kava groups. This research has been able to identify some aspects where there has been a significant impact or influence around kava consumption on women who choose to be kava consumers.

1.2.4 The Spouse of a Tongan Male Kava Consumer

In previous research by Port (2014), data from the Pacific Islands Families (PIF) study, findings highlighted that for many male kava consumers from various Pacific cultures, their kava intake had increased. Table 1 shows the significant increase in consumption for Tongan males.

Table 1

Kava Usage 2000-2011



Port, H. (2014).

Findings from that study identified that in the year 2011, over a quarter (26.4%) of the kava consumers had significant others ask them to cut down their kava usage. Of that 26.4% for which kava consumption was problematic, 80% were Tongan. Further research from Taufa's study suggested that excessive kava consumption was considered problematic for her participants (Taufa, 2014). The information provided by this doctoral research provides a valuable contribution to the existing knowledge base. This doctoral research provides some understanding and perspective from the spouse as to their experience and constructs with KRP. Whilst conducting previous kava research, the primary researcher was approached by spouses and daughters of kava consumers asking when they would get their turn to speak. This doctoral research has given a voice to the spouses and provided the opportunity for them to speak openly and honestly about the challenges, and successes they and their spouses have experienced through their involvement with KRP. Acquiring input from the spouses

adds diversity and depth to the study as they may not be involved directly with the preparation, serving, or consumption of kava however, they are impacted indirectly by KRP.

1.2.5 The Tou'a

According to Biersack (1991), the tou'a is considered the working area of a taumafa kava situated behind the kava bowl where participants are tasked with preparing and serving the kava. Arcia Tecun (2019) relays that nowadays the term tou'a often refers to the person serving the kava and is more likely to be associated with a tou'a fefine. In this research, the term tou'a will refer to the female kava server unless otherwise stated. Taufa (2014) identified that tou'a being present at a formal faikava can make the event more official depending on the event. Taufa (2014), and Ma'u (2017) highlight that some tou'a are exposed to disrespectful comments or behaviours of kava group participants in less formal settings where tou'a are enticed to participate for money. Taufa (2014) suggested that the way a tou'a is viewed in the present day is in a derogatory way which is challenging for those who tou'a as their only source of income. As the role of the tou'a adapts to the needs of the community they serve, this doctoral research sought to understand and gain clarity on how the evolution of KRP impacts their perception of their role as a tou'a. For the research to provide equilibrium to the findings, it was necessary to explore the perception other participants had on the tou'a role, and whether they believed there was still a place for the tou'a today. Unknowingly to the researcher, once the talanoa began with the participants, it soon became clear that two-thirds of the participants have performed the role of tou'a at some point in their life. Through talanoa with the participants, they were able to provide rich and in-depth information regarding the tou'a role in areas that have previously had little research conducted. The insight the research has unveiled includes what a traditional tou'a role may look like and how that has evolved; what consequences may result from the evolution of the tou'a role, and whether education is the key to making changes for tou'a of today.

1.3 Rationale and Significance of the Study

In this section, you will gain an understanding as to why this study is necessary, what ways it can benefit those who read it, and how it can contribute and be useful in the many areas where KRP may be relevant.

1.3.1 Why This Doctoral Research Is Important

Longitudinal kava consumption data gathered from the PIF study, identified a dearth of information on the effect kava consumption has on families and suggested that further research is necessary (Port, 2014). Currently, there are several informative kava studies including Fehoko (2014), Nosa and Ofanoa (2009), and Arcia Tecun (2019). Research from Taufa (2014) provides some insight into a female perspective regarding the wife of a kava consumer and the challenges kava consumption has had on the marital relationship. Taufa's (2014) research has highlighted one aspect of this doctoral

research that is enhanced by including aspects such as the beneficial impacts of a spouse consuming kava. To this is added the voice of the female kava consumer, and the tou'a. The female voice in KRP until now has been somewhat missing and this doctoral study aims to bring that female voice to the forefront alongside the male voice.

Quality research is abundant in areas of health, behavioural, and social sciences conducted by anthropologists such as Tēvita Ka'ili (2017), Daniel Hernandez (Arcia Tecun, 2019), and Apo Aporosa (2016). Their research provides a wealth of knowledge pertaining to the development and behaviours of Tongans and have contributed significantly to the field of KRP. Nevertheless, there is a dearth of research on kava within the realms of women's studies in Aotearoa. This doctoral research is aimed at stemming that gap by providing vital information about KRP from three diverse aspects. This multi-layered approach provides information from multiple aspects that amplify the female voice around KRP by articulating three distinct clear perspectives on KRP.

This doctoral research was designed to explore how KRP may impact or influence various aspects of the participant's life including culture, health, and family relations. The results will be informative to those who have an interest in the Tongan community and want to gain an understanding of roles women may play within their cultural domain. As the participants share their experiences it will provide knowledge for those who are unfamiliar with KRP and how these practices may influence a Tongan woman's life. The findings of this doctoral research will deliver significant information for those needing some cultural competence to work with the Tongan community, give further insight into the contemporary practices around kava, and identify areas of concern that may need to be addressed. This research is beneficial in creating awareness around aspects of KRP and the positive effects this may have for Tongan women. Through an in-depth examination of the complexities of KRP, this doctoral research aims to foster appreciation and understanding among community members. The findings will offer valuable insights to individuals interested in KRP, providing knowledge of the female's experiences within this realm. By exploring diverse perspectives surrounding KRP in a comprehensive manner, this research contributes to a broader understanding of its multifaceted nature.

1.3.2 Aims and Objectives

Aim: The aim of this doctoral research was to gather information from a female perspective on KRP and the role she has within that. This includes her understanding of the traditional practices, and how areas of KRP may have evolved. The focus of this doctoral research centred around the involvement of the participants in areas of KRP such as Tongan female kava consumer, the spouse of a Tongan male kava consumer, and the tou'a. By examining these specific areas, the research aimed to gain an understanding of the dynamics, perspectives, and experiences of the participant within the context of KRP and highlight how these may have evolved over time.

Objectives: The objectives of this research include the following:

- To explore a Tongan female perspective on KRP and identify factors that impact her role within that setting.
- Gather and extract data through thematic analysis to produce rich and meaningful data from the participants that will contribute to the current pool of kava research.
- Produce research that is informative and provides a new perspective on KRP.
- Identify possible interventions or solutions to any issues that may be identified through the thematic analysis process.
- Identify theoretical and practical implications from this research and provide recommendations.

1.4 Summary

The introduction section provides an overview of Pacific peoples, the migration to Aotearoa, and what that looks like as a population currently residing in Aotearoa. As the migrants of the 1950s created strongholds for their families in Tamaki Makaurau, the Pacific population is gradually increasing, and more Pacific are born in Aotearoa making it a young population. With the population increasing and rapidly exceeding the accommodation available, many Pacific families have seen multiple families sharing a single home leading to overcrowding and the subsequent health issues that accompany overcrowding. These health conditions can be preventable if housing is improved. It is encouraging that the government is putting funding into creating more housing for Pacific families.

As the Tongan population increases the Tongan language declines. This increases the importance of activities that enable the young Tongan population to connect with their culture. Like Hau'ofa (1994) says, some view the ocean as a vast body of water that separates us however, for the people of the Pacific, the ocean provides a way for all to connect. It is not just through the ocean that Pacific peoples seek to connect, it is through our tupu'anga (ancestors), culture, belief systems, where we live, or any other way that a connection can be made that will support and encourage the relationship. Participating in aspects of the Tongan culture will strengthen connections with one's heritage.

Discussing a brief history of kava and its related practices provides background and historical snapshots of the traditions that inform KRP from its conception to its consumption. Socio-economic determinants of Pacific peoples as highlighted through health, and housing conditions, impacts the survival of Tongan culture, language, and cultural practices including the KRP. As tradition influences culture and current practices, then it is inevitable that some women will continue to consume kava as they uphold their perception of the traditions of their culture.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

“Other countries write their history in books.

In Tonga, it is written in the kava rituals”.

– Queen Sālote Tupou III

Introduction

This chapter explores previous research and literature that is connected to KRP. Literature was sought using keywords such as Pacific peoples, the evolution of kava, kava, Tonga, Tongan culture, and tradition, faiva faka Tonga (Tonga dance), tātatau (tattoo), Tongan women, tou'a, talanoa, female kava consumer, Faa'i Kavei Koula 'a e Tonga, and tauhi vā. Search engines included google, google scholar, AUT library database, other university databases where access was permitted, the research commons website, and any other link that emerged through scrolling through these databases and articles. This included links to other researchers' master's and PhD theses. Wikipedia pages on kava provided a valuable reference list creating opportunities to investigate topics further. Journals such as AlterNative an International Journal of Indigenous Peoples, The Journal of the Polynesian Society, Pacific Health Dialogue, and the Journal of New Zealand and Pacific studies were vital on the topic of kava. Whereas, the International Journal of Health Sciences, the Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry, and the New Zealand Medical Journal were effective in researching aspects of research methodology and methods. There were several occasions when colleagues, friends, and family interested in this topic would send articles to the researcher via Facebook messenger, email, or tag the researcher in articles that they believed would be valuable in this doctoral research. All the searches included any form of reference around kava and related practices.

This chapter examines literature encompassing the Tongan diaspora in Aotearoa exploring aspects such as migration, societal and cultural challenges, as well as the preservation of traditional values and belief systems. The Tongan community in Aotearoa is experiencing steady growth, with a noticeable emergence of a younger generation. The migration of Tongan people to Aotearoa has led to a strong desire among individuals to preserve and reconnect with their cultural heritage in various ways. Within Tongan culture, practices such as tātatau (tattooing), faiva faka Tonga (Tongan performing arts), kava, and KRP hold significant importance. Over time, certain aspects of these traditions have undergone some form of evolution. This section focuses on the literature surrounding the evolution of these practices, with particular emphasis on kava and practices related to kava. These practices encompass the preparation, serving, and consumption of kava in various settings such as faikava (to do kava), Taumafa (Royal) kava, and kalapu (club) kava. Gaining an understanding of the cultural dynamics surrounding KRP within Tongan communities necessitates exploring the experiences of the tou'a, female kava consumers, and the spouses of male kava consumers. By

examining their perspectives and roles, a deeper insight into the cultural significance and intricacies of KRP can be achieved.

2.1 Pacific Migration, Evolution, and Connection

The diaspora of people of the Pacific in Aotearoa began with the intent of being mutually economically beneficial to the New Zealand government. 1916 saw some of the first Pacific migrants in Aotearoa as Pacific men were recruited for New Zealand's World War 1 campaign and young women from the Pacific were sought for domestic and home help duties on farms in the South Island (Mackley-Crump, 2015). This migration increased significantly post World War 2 as Pacific peoples were encouraged to emigrate to Aotearoa to fill the labour shortage and secure accommodation and employment for themselves and their families (Mackley-Crump, 2015). Whilst there was a labour shortage all was well. Within a few decades, society's acceptance of the Pacific peoples living in Aotearoa became toxic. In the 1970s the economy went into recession and with increasing unemployment, the Police and immigration officials teamed up and targeted Pacific overstayers. What ensued was the dawn raids.

The dawn raids were a series of raids conducted by Police on the Pacific community. Members of the Pacific community had their homes surrounded by police in the early hours of the morning then the police would 'raid' the premises looking for overstayers. They were conducted at dawn with the hope of catching overstayers out before they left for work. According to Prebble (2021, paragraph 2), Dr Melani Anae, Associate Professor of Pacific Studies at the University of Auckland shared that these raids were 'the most blatantly racist attack on Pacific peoples by the New Zealand government in New Zealand's history'. The National Government believed Pacific citizens were not welcome, they were a threat to Aotearoa and therefore authorised the continuation of the raids (Spoonley, 2011). In 1986, 86% of all those prosecuted for overstaying were from the Pacific region. However, they only made up a third of all overstayers with the majority having migrated from Europe or North America (Spoonley, 2011). The discrimination against the people from the Pacific was being perpetuated by the National government and its stance on Pacific immigration. In 2018 discrimination against the Pacific resurfaced as the government introduced a pilot program on the prioritisation of profiling overstayers who were in breach of their visa conditions. Outrage occurred when it was declared that the country of origin would be a factor in the profiling (Pullar-Strecker, 2018).

Currently, there is a petition before Parliament led by local Pacific leaders requesting the Pāremata Aotearoa (New Zealand Parliament) provide a pathway for Pacific overstayers to gain permanent residency in Aotearoa on compassionate grounds (Pāremata Aotearoa, 2022). Understanding the pressures of being an overstayer in Aotearoa, and the financial pressures of not being able to work legally have been a factor for a participant and some of their colleagues to engage in KRP. Their

involvement with KRP has provided an income while they go through the process of applying for residency in Aotearoa.

Life for Tongan people now living in Aotearoa had to evolve in some form to acculturate into their new homeland. Currently, we have a Tongan community of those born in the Pacific who migrated to Aotearoa, those born in Aotearoa, and those who are raised in Aotearoa in a multiethnic family. First and second-generation Aotearoa-born Tongans whose parents and grandparents were part of the migrations in the 1960s and 1970s, have seen a loss or diluted connection to their culture with some not comfortable participating in cultural formalities (Schoone, 2010). Connecting to others is an important factor in Tongan culture. When Tongans meet for the first time, they seek connections through talanoa (Kailahi, 2017). They seek connections through their tupu'anga (ancestors) and where they have come from to be where they are today. Pacific peoples who have a desire to connect with their roots will seek ways to make and express this connection. One way is through the art of tātatau (tattoo), faiva faka Tonga (dance), and KRP. When connecting with what is perceived as traditional, there are often underlying subtle ways in which the traditional context has somewhat evolved. As cultural practices are passed down from generation to generation through socialisation and learning, individuals and communities may adapt these practices to meet their changing needs, values, and circumstances. Through interactions with other cultures, new ideas and beliefs may be introduced that influence existing cultural practices. This doctoral research gives an overview of two other cultural practices and how they have evolved due to the influence of Christianity being introduced into the Tongan culture and the way it shaped the evolution of the lakalaka, and traditional tātatau (tattoo).

2.2 Evolving Cultural Practices

When Christianity arrived in Tonga certain practices were gradually eradicated from the culture. These included: Tutu'u nima – cutting off part of the little finger when a person of stature passes away; Fangatua – men and women performing social boxing and wrestling matches; and Tumumosi – removing beauty spots off the body with a burning rolled Ngatu (tapa cloth) (Manulua, 2009). Tātatau (tattoo) was one tradition that was intentionally removed from the culture to the extent that there was a law decreed to ensure it was no longer practiced. Several years later, the art of Tongan tātatau (tattoo) is being revived and provides a way for disconnected Tongans who are born in Aotearoa, to connect with their Tongan heritage through tātatau (tattoo).

2.2.1 Tātatau

Tattoo or tātatau in Tongan is derived from two words. Ta – to strike, beat, or mark time. Tatau means to repeat, similar, same, and symmetrical. In ancient Tonga, Tongan priests were highly skilled in the art of tātatau and followed strict protocols when performing tātatau (tattoo) (Gilbert, 2000). Porcella (2009) suggests that due to Tongan priests performing the tātatau (tattoo), would indicate the significance of tattoos within the Tongan culture. A tātatau on a chief identified his status. As a noble,

he was not to be touched by commoners, and therefore tātatau (tattoo) of chiefs was typically performed by a specialist Samoan tattooist who had the sacred duty to perform tātatau (tattoo) on high-ranking individuals (Powell, 2012). Mariner, d'Urville, McKern, and Gifford report in detail their account of the intricacies and importance of the Tongan tātatau (tattoo), its design patterns, rituals, and symbolism (Powell, n.d.). Tofua'ipangai (2009) suggests that tātatau was a traditional practice, and in the case of woman tātatau (tattoo), it was important that her genealogy be reflected in the tātatau where the kupesi (patterns) are the same as her mother, grandmother, and so forth. This is conveyed through symmetrical lines tattooed across the women's thighs (Ding, 2016).

In 1839 after his conversion to Christianity and wanting to align cultural values more closely with anga faka Tonga (Tongan way of life), Tu'i Tonga King George Tupou I instituted the first ever constitution containing written laws called the Vava'u Code in which tātatau (tattoo) were declared unlawful, although King George Tupou I had a tātatau (tattoo) (Manulua, 2009). According to Manulua (2009) post institution of the Vava'u code, Tongan chiefs especially those of the Kanokupolu line would travel to Upolu and Savai'i in Samoa to get their tātatau (tattoo).

Traditional tātatau (tattoo) faded into obscurity only to re-emerge in 2002 under the guidance of Sulu'ape Alaiva'a a specialist Samoan tattoo artist. According to Ding (2019), Sulu'ape met with several Tongans in Hawaii including Aisea Toetu'u intending to revive traditional Tongan tātatau (tattoo). With his knowledge of traditional Samoan tatau (tattoo), researching the history of Tongan tātatau, studying design patterns and early paintings, and the knowledge obtained from the Tongan people themselves, in 2003 on the Island of Hawaii, Sulu'ape performed the first traditional Tongan tātatau in 165 years (Powell, n.d.). Within the next two years, more Tongans sought a traditional tātatau.

Some Pacific people feel disconnected from their cultures and try to reconnect through the art of tātatau (tattoo) without the knowledge of traditions that have once been an essential part of the process. Porcella (2009) states that traditional ngatu kupesi (Tapa pattern) designs are a symbol of identity and a cultural marker for young Tongans who get a tattoo today. Manulua (2009) warns that in pursuit of immediate benefits, some tattoo artists sacrifice traditional cultural training, and practice tātatau (tattoo) without the skills and knowledge it takes to obtain cultural authorisation. As a result, people are walking around with uneven, substandard, and incorrect designs performed by men who have not been trained correctly (Manulua, 2009). For those who choose to connect but want to forgo or do not know how to access the traditional tātatau (tattoo), they may access their local tattoo artist with a modern design that incorporates what their culture/s means to them. In this sense, the tātatau (tattoo) patterns or designs may have evolved to incorporate the culture/s that young Pacific people identify with, and the equipment and technology utilised to deliver the tattoo have also evolved to meet the needs of the supplier and the demands of the recipient. As over 81% of the Pacific

population identifies as Pacific/Māori, their tātatau (tattoo) design may incorporate both cultures therefore, the traditional patterns of both Māori and Pacific evolve to become a design unique to the wearer and their cultural history.

2.2.2 Faiva Faka Tonga

Faiva faka Tonga (Tongan dance) is another way that people young and old connect with their culture. Recently there was an article in the news regarding two punake (choreographers) proposing to copyright the basic haka of Tongan dance as their own (Latu, 2022). Legal action was sought to trademark or copyright Tongan haka, body and hand movements, and gestures when performing Tongan faiva (dance). One of those haka was the lakalaka.

Māloni a punake (choreographer) from Ha'apai says Prince Tuku'aho was visiting and saw the children performing an action song that was taught to them to help them learn their times tables (Latu, 2022). The prince loved the performance and returned to Tongatapu requesting his Punake (choreographer) develop it further, and that became the lakalaka (Latu, 2022). The lakalaka arouses community pride when it is performed by all the women and men of the village as they execute a series of foot and hand movements (Kaeppler 1971). The lakalaka requires knowledge of the history of Tonga where verses of the lakalaka provide snapshots of moments in history told in a non-linear fashion (Pond, 1995).

After the missionaries arrived in Tonga, the lakalaka evolved in many ways. It started subtly when movements needed to be adjusted to align with church values. According to Kaeppler (1970), evolutionary changes were made to the lakalaka because Christian values demanded that certain dance moves had to be altered to placate church leaders. Māloni states that some basic haka had to be modified/evolve as they breached the faka'apa'apa or respect between the men and women that are adhered to today (Latu, 2022).

Evolution is inevitable. As we look at the traditions of our tupu'anga (ancestors), their traditions evolved into what we see as traditions now. How much influence did the missionaries or Christianity have on traditional cultural practices? When monarchs embraced Christianity, there were cultural practices evolved to align with their newfound spiritual ideology. How the past will continue to influence or impact the future will remain to be seen. Through historical events, we have seen the impact of migration and the need for a stronger workforce evolve into a political agenda that sought to displace a workforce that they originally sought. The tātatau was once a teller of genealogy passed from mother to daughter and has evolved to the fusion of kupesi with other cultural designs unique to the recipient. As some people like Māloni and his lakalaka strive to stand true to their traditions, many will adapt traditional practices to meet their needs. Socialisation into a new culture, tātatau (tattoo), faiva faka Tonga (Tongan dance), and KRP has gone through layers of evolution. As one strives to connect with their culture or strives to assimilate their cultural heritage with their home in a new

country, cultural traditions such as KRP are evolving in many facets. Foliaki (1997) emphasises that for Tongan migrants in Aotearoa, the family unit plays a crucial role in the process of socialisation into the new culture. The family serves as the primary source through which individuals learn and adapt to the customs, values, and practices of their new environment. However, the Tongan diaspora in Aotearoa experienced a breakdown of the family unit leading to an increase in single parent households. This, in turn, led to an upsurge in single-parent households and a sense of disconnection from their Tongan culture. The stress and financial hardships experienced by these migrants further exacerbated these issues, creating additional barriers to maintaining cultural ties and traditions (Foliaki, 1997). As you will read in this doctoral research, the desire to connect to their culture is one of the factors that contributes to why KRP are increasing for the Tongan population in Aotearoa.

2.3 Kava and Kava-Related Practices

This section discusses the properties of the kava plant and the benefits and concerns surrounding its usage, and the effects that it has on the consumer. As the effects are identified we will further discuss how the kava properties are experienced by the consumer and what they attribute to these feelings.

2.3.1 Kava

Kava (botanical name - *Piper methysticum*) is a plant that belongs to the pepper family and is largely grown in the Pacific Islands where it flourishes in a tropical environment. Lebot, Merlin, & Lindstrom (1992), assert that the origins of kava develop in Vanuatu and not Papua New Guinea as previously thought. Kava was domesticated approximately 3000 years ago and was cultivated, and consumed in many islands in Micronesia, Polynesia, and Melanesia (Lindstrom, 2004). Kava existed in Polynesia's major islands Samoa, Tonga, Cook Islands, Hawaii, Wallis and Fortuna, Marquesas, and the Society Islands including Tahiti; Melanesia's less mountainous areas of Fiji, Vanuatu, and New Guinea; and in Micronesia only two islands were found with kava, Pohnpei and Kosrae (Lindstrom, 2004). Climate and environmental factors limited the cultivation of kava in other islands in these locations, for example, Aotearoa is too cold to grow kava.

According to Wang, Qu, Bittenbender, and Li (2015), fresh kava root contains on average 80% water, whereas dried root contains approximately 43% starch, 20% dietary fibre, 15% kavalactones, 12% water, 3.2% sugars, 3.6% protein, and 3.2% minerals. The kava plants are usually harvested around 4-7 years when the rootstocks have matured although, some kava growers delay harvesting to increase the potency of the kavalactone content (Singh 2004). The kava plant contains kavalactones of which approximately 18 are deemed to be psychoactive (Cairney, Maruff, & Clough, 2002). The kavalactones are located predominantly in the rhizomes, roots, and stems with kavalactone content determined by the environment and conditions the kava plant is grown (Sarris, LaPorte, & Schweitzer, 2011). Cairney, Maruff, and Clough (2002) suggest the potency of the plant varies due to genetics,

age of the plant, soil properties, size of the rhizome, and how the plant is processed. It is the kavalactone effect from the kava being consumed, that enables the consumer to feel relaxed.

The biological effects of the kavalactones are reported to include analgesic, anxiolytic, anticonvulsant, and sedative properties due to the pharmacological properties that impact the inhibitory neurotransmitter Gamma-Aminobutyric Acid (GABA) (Singh & Singh, 2002). Western cultures have realised the benefits of kava and utilised the kavalactone content in the treatment of mental health disorders including anxiety. The non-addictive and non-hypnotic properties of kava make it an appropriate alternative treatment for generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) once efficacy is established (Savage et al., 2015). Research conducted by Sarris et al. (2013) revealed that an aqueous intake of 120/240 mg of kavalactones per day showed a significant decrease in those who were diagnosed with moderate to severe GAD and had no significant side effects. The Cochrane review recommended kava at 60-280 mg of kavalactones per day for the treatment of anxiety symptoms (Pittler & Cochrane, 2002). Kava has been the subject of more research as it increases in use across many areas. In rat trials, Bian et al. (2020) have found promising effects of kava across many health disorders however they highlight that to understand kava's full potential in the health arena, there needs to be further research conducted around the cultivation of the plant, the pharmacokinetic components of kava, and more trials will need to be conducted on human participants. The pharmacokinetic aspect of kava and its psychoactive properties may require further research in the scientific realm. However, for the people of the Pacific, psychoactive properties are part of the connection the consumer has with their culture.

People of Oceania have incorporated the effects of psychoactive plants such as kava, betel nut, pollen, ginger, and tobacco in their cultural activities long before it was able to be recorded (Turner, 2012). Turner (1986) suggests kava is the medium through which the kava consumer can communicate with the supernatural. The symbolism of the kava being consumed encompasses the hint of death and the hope of life, and by partaking in the kava, the consumer transforms into the '*sacrificial victim*' (Turner, 1986, p. 203). Arcia Tecun (2019,) proposes that the kava is a representation of '*ancestor, sacrifice, resurrection, and offering,*' that when mixed with water brings new life, and the ancestor's energy and mana are taken in by the recipient who consumes that kava (p. 258). The origins of kava through the legend of Kava'onau represent '*chiefliness through femininity*' and through the sacrifice of Kava'onau come to the principles of '*sacrifice, truth, justice, beauty, and love*' (Arcia Tecun, Reeves, and Wolfgramm, 2020, p. 176). The myths and legends of kava and its origins are kept alive through KRP as identified in the legends of 'Aho'eitu, Kava'onau, and Faimālie.

2.3.2 Preparation and Serving of Kava

The preparation and serving of kava are steeped in tradition and connections to God, King, and the country. As KRP are evolving, some aspects of the traditional ways of preparing and serving the kava

have gone through their own evolution. This section will discuss the traditional aspects of preparing and serving the kava and then explore the areas that have evolved to meet the needs of the consumers.

In the early 1900s, the local Tongans living in Tonga were not permitted to drink alcohol from the westerners. But this was not an issue because they had kava. According to Te Pana (1914), this did not concern the locals as they would have the *'best damsels'* chew the kava root and expectorate it into the kumete (kava bowl) to be mixed with water and then passed around in coconut shells. Rensch (2015) states that the young women who masticated the kava root would seek to find a husband quickly before their teeth would become little nubs due to chewing kava. Many of the pālagi (European) acquired a taste for kava and insisted on cleaner methods for the breaking down of the kava root. According to Helu (1993) and Biersack (1991), the preparation of the kava infusion evolved after missionaries intervened and insisted that the kava root be pounded as opposed to being masticated as they viewed this as unsanitary. Gifford (1924) stated that due to contact with Euro-American cultures, stone implements were introduced to pound the kava root on a stone slab instead of chewing it. The tou'a would pound the kava root between the stones where it would be broken down to a stringy yellow powder which would be placed in the kava bowl (Te Pana, 1914). This exhibits how KRP started to evolve through Western influence presenting the utilisation of stone utensils to pound and grind the kava root into powder form.

The kava bowl itself also evolved with both the rim, the size, the number of legs to hold the kava bowl, and the shape of the kava bowl being altered (Boissonnas, 2014). Kava bowls could be either circular or lenticular and were commonly referred to as kumete kava. However, the kava bowl used with ceremonies in which the Tu'i Tonga was present is called the tāno'a (Royal kava bowl) (Gifford 1929). Tongan kava bowls were extremely rare, and Captain James Cook and his men were the first documented case of taking kava bowls to Europe between 1773-1777 (Boissonnas, 2014). The size of the kava bowl has gone through evolution for various reasons. In the mid-18th century under the patronage of the Tu'i Tonga, two Samoan master carver clans were relocated to the Island of Kabara where the hardwood from the large Vesi tree was ideal for canoes, houses, and kava bowls. The vesi (Pacific Teak) trees made it possible for the Tu'i Tonga to have the extra-large kava bowls made. The Tu'i Tonga's principal carver and his kinsman living in Kabara became the dominant kava bowl producers of extremely large kava bowls exported through the Pacific via Tonga by Tongan navigators (Boissonnas, 2014).

When it comes to straining the kava, myths suggest that pulu (coconut husk) fibres were originally used to strain the kava mixture. However, debris would break off and float on the surface of the kava mixture therefore this was ceased in favour of the fau (Hibiscus fibres) (Helu, 1993). The fau (Hibiscus fibres) is a woody fibre from the Hibiscus tree where the bark is stripped, and the inner bark is shredded to form the fibrous mesh used to mix and strain the kava. According to William son

(1939), during the taumafa kava ceremony, the process of straining the mixture bears great responsibility and requires finesse, skill, and strength of the mixer to ensure the procedure is followed strictly under the direction of the matāpule (chief's spokesperson). Currently, usually, only formal occasions would see a fau (Hibiscus fibres) being used as others select the more convenient tangai (a small thin cloth bag) in which the kava powder is deposited and then rinsed through the water (Helu, 1993). Other strainer products may include artificial products such as cloths or muslin and non-conventional strainers such as nylon pantyhose (Arcia Tecun, Reeves, & Wolfgramm, 2020).

Once the kava is ground, and strained, it is then served. In the early 1800s, William Mariner was a young 14-year-old English boy from the ship Port au Prince which berthed in Tonga. Half the ship's crew was massacred, and the ship was scuttled. Mariner's life was spared, and he was adopted into the family of chief Finau 'Ulukalala where he participated in wars, learned the Tongan language, and many other customs and traditions (Mariner & Martin, 1827). Mariner recalls sitting in a kava ceremony and while the ceremony was underway, the outer circle of participants took the task of making kava cups. They cut the unexpanded leaves of the banana tree and folded them into squares, the ends were woven in a specific way which was then held together by the fibres of the stem of the leaf making a kava pelu (folded cup). The banana leaf cup is considered the earliest utensil used for serving kava (Williamson, 1939). The pelu (folded cup) were eventually replaced by ipu (coconut shell cup) (Helu, 1993).

The evolution of making and serving kava have evolved largely for practical purposes; the chewing of the kava root was replaced by stoneware as this was unhygienic; the pulu was replaced by the fau (Hibiscus fibres) as this left unwanted debris and was then replaced by the tangai (cloth bag) or other household items for convenience, and the pelu is replaced by the ipu for its leakproof capability. What about the kava itself? How has that changed over the years? Traditionally kava was mixed with water, served, and consumed. Nowadays you can buy kava in a variety of flavours, such as a milkshake, extract, pill, tincture, cocktail, tea, cake, mousse, and even as a chocolate bar. As its popularity increases, it is not surprising that entrepreneurs are creating different ways to market a product that is in demand. Kava is no longer a drink used just for ceremonial purposes in the Pacific. It is a marketable global product that has appeal across many cultures. With so many areas of KRP evolving, it is certain to have an impact on the way kava is consumed.

2.3.3 Kava Consumption

Te Pana (1914) suggests there is no comparison in the western world where you can turn up to a friend's house any time of the day and sit around a kava bowl with free-flowing conversation while kava is dispensed to all who are there. For some Tongans born in Aotearoa, becoming involved in KRP has been a way for them to connect with the Tongan language, and their culture, in a place where traditional beliefs and customs, are nurtured, reinforced, and maintained (Fehoko, 2015).

Anthropologist Charles Urbanowicz who travelled extensively through the Pacific for 50 years and completed his PhD research in Tonga, suggests that ‘*kava drinking has been the way that Tongans maintained their own cultural identity in the face of cultural (namely "religious") colonialism*’ (Urbanowicz, 1975, p.41). ‘*The Taumafa kava, with His Majesty as the guest of honour at the various islands, provides all assembled Tongans with a sense of belonging to Tonga*’. (Urbanowicz, 1975, p. 44). In Tonga, when discussing the Royal kava ceremony, Princess Salote Mafile’o Pilolevu Tuita states the kava ceremony is a reinforcer of cultural values and beliefs, it is significant to Tongans because it represents loyalty, sacrifice, love, commitment, and allegiance to the King and fellow countryman (Smith, 2011). Many aspects of the kava ceremony see the interlinking of sacrifice, and devotion (Turner, 1986).

2.3.4 Faikava

Faikava is a place where through the influence of hymns and music, one feels the power to heal yet speak out simultaneously (Arcia Tecun, 2019). According to Fehoko (2014), faikava is a ceremonial practice and also a space that encourages the building of relationships, a place where knowledge is shared, and a place that fosters a reinforcement of cultural identity. Faikava simply means ‘to do kava’. It is a place where many Tongan men and women feel they can connect with their culture. Nosa and Ofanoa (2009) identified four motivating factors that contribute to men attending faikava. These are having a social outing, status connected to the kava plant, using kava as a substitute for alcohol, and developing and strengthening relationships. Faikava has other benefits for the attendees including conflict resolution, relief from pent-up emotions, and the opportunity to discuss personal issues amongst a brotherhood in a safe environment (Fry, & Bjorkqvist, 1997).

Participants had different viewpoints on the term faikava. Arcia Tecun (n.d.) suggests that faikava is in the home whereas kalapu kava is in another part of the home such as the garage. Most participants agreed that faikava was only in the home but there were other KRP in the home such as ‘eva. Therefore, the term faikava is used throughout this doctoral research only when participants specifically refer to it as faikava. This is predominantly in the spouse section.

2.3.5 Taumafa Kava

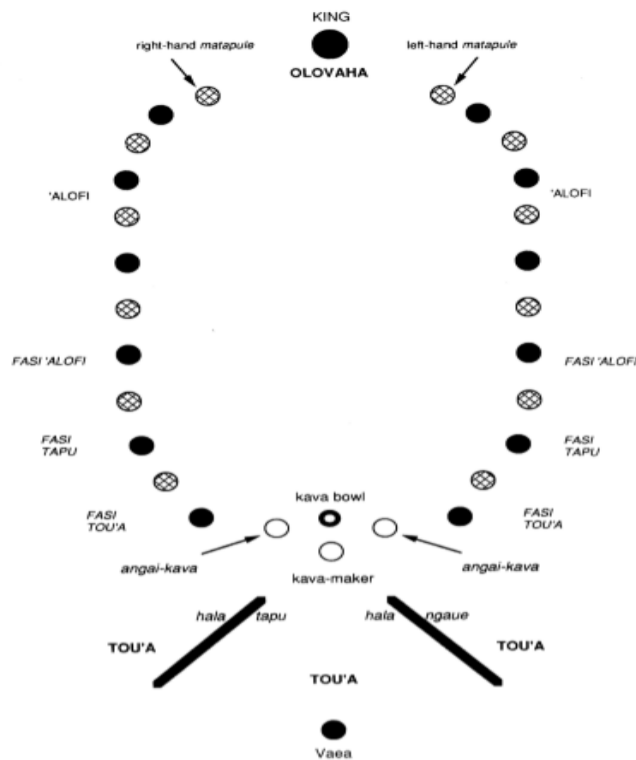
Urbanowicz (1975) states there are only two types of kava ceremonies. One where the reigning King is present, the other when the king is not present. When the reigning king is present this is the Taumafa kava. In this setting, there are strict protocols that all participants adhere to.

The Taumafa Kava (Royal kava ceremony) dates to the first Tu’i Tonga. The taumafa kava seating configuration as indicated in Figure 1 identifies the main circle where the King and higher-ranking officials with their matāpule sit, and the beginning of the lower circle. The two circles form a figure 8.

The main circle is the olovaha where the superior-ranking title holders sit, and the lower circle that forms around the tou'a is where the lower-ranked title holders sit (Biersack, 1991; Collocott, 1927).

Figure 1

The Taumafa kava ceremony configuration



Note: (Adapted from Bott 1972a:209 as cited in Biersack, 1991).

The reigning monarch, known as the 'Hau', holds significant symbolic and ceremonial importance. As the central figure in the ceremony, the King represents authority, leadership, and embodies power, unity, and sovereignty. His presence establishes the continuity of traditional customs and the preservation of cultural heritage. The King's involvement highlights his role as a protector and guardian of Tongan traditions and values, reinforcing the importance of respect, hierarchy, and communal unity.

During the taumafa kava the King is accompanied by his matāpule (kings' spokesperson) who ensures correct protocols are followed. The nobles or chiefs will have their matāpule accompany them and may have them speak on their behalf (Wolfgramm, 2001). In the taumafa kava, the king's matāpule will conduct the ceremony and call out the order of events. The procedures begin with the presentation of the kava and food under the instructions of the matāpule which is then counted,

presented to the king, cleared away, and then the kava is prepared (Biersack, 1991). The kava is ground to a powder, mixed with water, squeezed, and then made ready for consumption. Straining the kava to make it ready for consumption is done with elaborate movements and gestures performed in a slow, elegant manner (Biersack, 1991). Urbanowicz (1975) suggests that it is during the taumafa kava that the Tongan people who are assembled at this auspicious occasion feel a '*sense of belonging*' in this observance of unity (p. 44).

It is only considered a taumafa kava if the monarch is present. If the king is not present and the nobles are having a kava ceremony, then it is called the 'ilo kava (Feldman, 1980). Helu (1993) breaks the non-monarch faikava into four subgroups. These are:

- 1: Tau fakalokua: An informal kava party for fishermen or farmers after work. The kava mixer may be a daughter, a son, or one of the men's wives.
- 2: Faikava 'eva: This is the traditional courtship faikava. With her parent's permission, an interested young man will come to her home, and she will mix kava for him and his family and friends. It is forbidden for any member of her family in her generation to be present at the faikava 'eva.
- 3: Kava fakasiasi: This is faikava after church or on Sunday. This is an assimilation of modern religion and cultural beliefs and traditions.
- 4: Kalapu kava: Kava clubs. These are often set in the community with an opportunity for attendees to raise funds.

Brisbane Tongan Community Inc (2019) identifies '*reconciliation*' as an additional subgroup of faikava, identifying the need to seek forgiveness for any ill they may have caused (p.4).

These forms of kava ceremonies or gatherings are all experiencing change as KRPs evolve. The tau fakalokua and faikava 'eva are diminishing as societal and economic conditions change. For example, faikava 'eva is diminishing as other forms of dating and courtship are becoming more popular (Helu, 1993). Feldman (1980) posits that there are two main contexts for informal kava drinking and that is faikava, and kalapu kava. Unlike 'eva, kava groups such as the kalapu kava are flourishing.

2.3.6 Kalapu Kava (Kava Club)

Kalapu kava is translated into kava club. Ofanoa et al, (2020) suggest that kalapu kava provides a space where men can come together and honour the symbolism and the divine facets of the kava while they consume the kava together. According to Tonga (2020), kalapu kava is where anga faka-Tonga (The Tongan way) is taught including the need to be humble, show respect, be generous, and the importance of maintaining healthy relationships with others. Kalapu was originally a formal affair and first appeared in the 1950s however, it has since evolved to be more egalitarian where all members of

the kalapu kava are empowered to participate on an equal platform regardless of rank or position outside of the kalapu kava (Arcia Tecun, Reeves, & Wolfgramm, 2020).

Each kalapu kava may have different protocols that they adhere to nevertheless, they all have some form of fundraising, donations, or membership fees associated with them (Arcia Tecun, Reeves, & Wolfgramm, 2020). Manase Lua a respected leader in the Tongan community states that there is over 100 kalapu kava in Tamaki Makaurau whose networks are formed and raise funds to help with community projects, funerals, and other needs of the Tongan community (Ministry for Pacific Peoples, 2020). Awareness has been raised of the monetised KRPs such as the kalapu kava and back in 1993 Helu warned '*How the kalapu is going to change the other forms of kava it is too early yet to tell but it is symptomatic of the situation that money has already established itself well in the one institution that is most characteristic of Tongan culture*' (Helu, 1993, p 190). Some kalapu kava in Tamaki Makaurau ki te Tonga (South Auckland) have specific short- and long-term goals for fundraising including sending money back to their village in Tonga to put streetlights in and provide scholarships for students so they have better opportunities (Tonga, 2020). With many kalapu kava networking and raising funds to help families and communities in need, there are many benefits of kalapu kava. Ofanoa et al. (2020) caution that kalapu kava is not all positive and there are negative aspects to kalapu kava such as a decrease in productivity, health concerns, and strained relationships with male consumers. The male participants of the kalapu kava stated that the positive social and cultural aspects far outweigh the negatives. This is not always the case for all those involved with KRP. This becomes evident when it comes to engaging the services of a paid tou'a and the standards of a traditional kalapu kava decline.

2.3.7 The Tou'a

A tou'a is a person who serves the kava in a kava group. Lafitani (2011), and Wolfgramm (2001) define the traditional role of a tou'a as specifically for males in the taumafa kava during the preparation of the kava. The male tou'a uses dramatic actions and rhythmic head and hand movements that depict the creation of kava and its symbolism (Lafitani, 2011; Wolfgramm, 2001). However, there were specific occasions where the tou'a is a female. Traditionally when a young woman was approached to tou'a, it was under strict protocols, conducted in her home, and approved by her family. In less formal settings, when tou'a were chosen for social events, they were often young beautiful unmarried women who were virtuous, respected, and treated with respect by all participants of the faikava (Taufa, 2014). She would be restricted in her interactions with the men present including not talking with them (Taufa, 2014). Recent research suggests that the role of the tou'a has changed in informal settings. The introduction of monetary payment for the tou'a services has changed the role and the expectations that are embedded in it. Tou'a have become disrespected, considered a sexual object, and subjected to sexually offensive comments from men (Taufa, 2014). Arcia Tecun (2019)

suggests that some men consider that tou'a to be someone to flirt with, and that other women have felt it necessary to attend events where a tou'a was present to keep her safe. Tou'a have been referred to as prostitutes by other Tongan women in their paid role, which makes it challenging for the women who tou'a as a source of income (Taufa, 2014; Arcia Tecun 2019).

Not all informal kava sessions have a tou'a. In research conducted by Arcia Tecun (2019) across four countries, the percentage of a tou'a being present in informal faikava sessions was 18% as there was either stigma or elevation of the event having a female present. Having a female present as a tou'a in formal settings is still believed to elevate the status of the event and is one that is conducted with adherence to cultural etiquette (Taufa, 2014; Arcia Tecun, 2019).

In research conducted by Filihia (2001) it was stated that in Tongan society, the lineage of women dates to Pulotu and therefore women hold a chiefly status. This holds significant importance in determining an individual's personal status in relation to their relatives. According to Helu (1995) women have always been elevated above men in Tonga culture. Tonga is traditionally considered a patriarchal society nevertheless; women hold a significant level of social status due to the mehikitanga (sacred paternal aunt) and the fahu (eldest daughter) system within families (Tupou, 2021). The mehikitanga (paternal aunt) and the fahu (eldest daughter) are considered the primary line of descent, particularly when the fahu holds the position of the eldest female child (Filihia, 2001).

Women born and raised in Tonga understand the reverence and status of women in Tonga especially regarding the fahu (Tupou, 2021). The fahu has authority and certain rights over her brothers and their children (Foliaki, 1997). It is said that in the traditional setting, no important decision is made in the kainga (extended family) without the fahu (Foliaki, 1997). According to Filihia (2001), females can access traditional privileges from their brothers, and during special ceremonial events, they assume positions of honour. While the fahu custom was originally practiced among those of chiefly status, it has now evolved and been embraced by all levels of hierarchy within Tongan culture (Helu, 1995). The recognition of the importance and respect for women in Tongan society is reflected in the inclusion of a female tou'a in significant occasions. This practice not only pays homage to the role of the tou'a but also symbolises the esteem and honour attributed to the fahu.

2.3.8 Female Kava Consumers

Many KRPs are seen as strictly male-dominant events except for the tou'a, a bride, or a noble female guest of honour. Therefore, women consuming kava may be seen by some in the Tongan community as a breach of tradition. In Tongan culture, Tongan women are expected to uphold high cultural standards and values and the consumption of kava may see these compromised (Taufa, 2014). Arcia Tecun (2019) relays that during a discussion with a fellow researcher he lamented that young women are missing out on building relationships, having a safe social space, and developing cultural identity like the males have when they get to faikava. Young Tongan women are susceptible to binge

drinking, teenage pregnancy, and suicide which may be averted through female kava clubs (Arcia Tecun, 2019). Ma'u (2017) supports female kava consumption and states that it is a common practice now in Tonga. When Ma'u first started consuming kava she was criticised for it and likened to male consumers. However, now Ma'u will consume kava in her home regularly and has certain protocols in place for her and her guest consumers (Ma'u, 2017). Contrary to popular belief, according to Arcia Tecun (2019), a popular myth states that women have been consuming kava long before European documentation where the Goddess Faimālie could outdrink all male kava drinkers. Now women like Ikanamoe Ma'u are reclaiming their historical rights (Ka'ili, 2017b). Kalapu kava is evolving as more support and acceptance is given to women consuming kava in that setting instead of it being a male-only domain (Arcia Tecun, Reeves, & Wolfgramm, 2020). Mele Vea of the Silent Whistle kava club shares that growing up in Tonga all she saw were men drinking kava and the only woman there is the tou'a (Lolohea, 2021). Some women in the Silent Whistle kalapu kava were heavy drinkers of alcohol and now they don't drink in favour of kava. It would be great to see more Tongan girls out there consuming kava (Lolohea, 2021). This leads to the proposal that Tongan women being supported consuming kava may provide positive social benefits.

2.3.9 The Spouse of a Kava Consumer

As gender roles in KRPs evolve, there will be an impact on the female partners of kava consumers. Kava consumption is not problematic if the male kava consumer is taking care of his family obligations before kava commitments (Arcia Tecun, 2019). When male partners spend excessive amounts of time on KRPs, their female partners experienced loneliness, feelings of abandonment, family obligations not being met, and relationships between partner and children suffering (Taufa, 2014). Tension in marital relationships due to kava consumption has led to some men prioritising the family's needs and also having some wives attend faikava sessions with their husbands (Arcia Tecun, 2019). Taufa (2014) reported that some women supported their husbands in their KRP because they believed it made them more effective in their role as a father, and husband, and he was generally happier. It was viewed as a reward for him the weekend (Taufa, 2014). In the same study, Taufa (2014) identified that some spouses believed their husbands to be addicted to kava and when they tried to object or limit his access to KRP, then he would become aggressive. Not all spouses found their husband's KRP to be problematic.

KRPs are no longer straightforward male faikava sessions where they bond with other men and enjoy kava together. KRPs include the female kava consumer, the spouse of the consumer, the tou'a, and all others involved whether directly or indirectly with the preparing, serving, or consumption of kava. Gathering information through research provides new evidence and information regarding the evolution of KRP and how this may be impacting the role of Tongan women living in Aotearoa.

2.4 Summary

The Pacific migration to Aotearoa has been gradually increasing. Enlisting workers from the Pacific region to fill a labour shortage in the early 1900s was beneficial for Aotearoa until the labour shortage was satisfied in the 1970s. Between 1974 – 1976 the NZ Government implemented schemes to deport the Pacific population that had overstayed their visas despite the majority of overstayers being from North America and Europe. Fears arose in 2018 when Immigration NZ developed a deportation pilot scheme that some feared would use racial profiling and the country of origin as a factor in deportation. Their fears and pressures of being an overstayer have led some Tongan women to engage in KRP. This has enabled them to gain an income and maintain cultural connectedness while living in Aotearoa.

As the Tongan population is increasing and getting younger, it is important for some Tongan born in Aotearoa to connect to their ancestral lines. This may be through the form of tātatau, faiva faka Tonga or KRP. These forms enable the participant to embrace their culture in different ways. However, all three areas have been influenced by Christianity and evolved as a result of that. Tātatau was abolished once King George 1 became a Christian, faiva faka Tonga had to adapt specific movements to align with Christian values such as the placement of hands, and KRP evolved to meet the needs of the consumer.

Kava is an iconic part of the Tongan culture and is steeped in cultural values and traditions. Kavalactone content has proven efficacy in the treatment of anxiety and other mental health disorders. Its psychoactive properties can connect the kava consumer with their divine heritage. As identified in the literature, kava may be seen as the link between one's earthly existence and their divine ancestry (Turner, 1986; Arcia Tecun, 2019; Arcia Tecun, Reeves, and Wolfgramm, 2020).

KRP have evolved in many ways from how the kava is prepared, served, and consumed. The utensils and the kava bowl itself have had their evolutions. Ground kava is no longer just consumed in an aqueous solution but can be eaten in a cake or chocolate bar, or drunk in a milkshake, cocktail, or tincture. The ways kava can be utilised have grown immensely. It is a marketable product that has appeal globally.

The environment kava is consumed in has had its evolution with the formation of kalapu kava. Kalapu kava has brought about many monetary benefits to individuals and the wider community including villages back in Tonga. The introduction of money into KRP has seen other issues arise particularly around the payment of a tou'a. Benefits have been identified for spouses of kava consumers as they feel their husband is happier if he goes to faikava on the weekend and female kava consumers who embrace the heritage of their female ancestors consuming kava. Nevertheless, concerns were acknowledged around restricting a spouse's access to KRP and their subsequent aggression, and the community not accepting women consuming kava and seeing it as a negative practice.

This literature provides a broad view of the multifaceted products and settings of KRP. It is no longer only a powder base mixed with water but comes in many forms as it has evolved to meet the needs of the consumer. Its content makes it appealing and therefore marketable. While the existing literature has certain limitations regarding the fields of female kava consumers, spouses of kava consumers, and the role of the tou'a, this doctoral research aims to contribute to and expand upon the current available literature. By filling these gaps, this research will provide valuable insights and further enrich the understanding of these specific areas within the realm of kava-related practices.

Chapter 3: Methodology

“Vaevae Manava” (sharing of life/breath)

Introduction

This chapter provides the procedures taken place to support the aim of the research, and ensure the research undertaken is legitimate, scientifically sound, clear about why this research was conducted, and what measures were undertaken to produce this research. This methodology chapter outlines the theoretical framework, research design, procedure for data collection, the data analysis process, methods utilised, and ethical considerations including the impact of COVID-19 on the research process. Finding a research methodology that supports and empowers Pacific peoples was vital when establishing a foundation on which to base this research.

When determining the design of the study there were key factors that needed to be considered:

- What existing research frameworks are appropriate to support the research process, and foster an environment that would enhance the connection between researcher and participant whilst acknowledging the uniqueness of the participant’s lived experience?
- What methodologies support Pacific values and belief systems?
- What methods may be utilised that would show genuine appreciation and value to the participant as they share their experience?

The researcher believes the design of this doctoral research is supportive of both participant and researcher, honours Pacific belief systems, and provided a space where the participant felt valued and appreciated for their contribution to this doctoral research.

This doctoral research is firmly entrenched in the Kakala framework and adheres to the principles upon which Kakala is founded. As stated by Fua (2014), these principles encompass faka'apa'apa (respect), loto fakatokilalo (humility), fe'ofa'aki (love, compassion), and feveitokai (caring, generosity). Adhering to these ethical foundations ensures the integrity and appropriateness of the Kakala framework and encompasses a qualitative paradigm, constructivist epistemology, and relativism ontology. The methodologies employed include Talanoa and Tauhi vā to gather participants' experiences, enabling a deep exploration of their perspectives and insights.

Once information is gathered, thematic analysis is utilised to identify, analyse, and report patterns or themes within a dataset to provide in-depth information. This approach aligns with the qualitative paradigm, where active engagement with participants generates rich data for rigorous analysis.

3.1 Aim of the Study

The study aimed to gather information on a Tongan women's perspectives regarding her perception of the role she played in KRPs and how this has impacted or influenced her life. A Tongan woman in this doctoral research is defined as a female of Tongan descent. The information gathered would contribute to the dearth of research on women and kava. Through this doctoral research, the Tongan woman's voice will be heard from 10 Tongan women participants who share their experiences and perspective on KRP.

3.2 Theoretical Frameworks

The theoretical frameworks consist of the concepts, structure, and format of this research. If research is to be conducted on indigenous populations, it is important to recognise and identify fundamental concepts that may distort perceptions or definitions common to the indigenous culture (Ferris-Leary, 2013). Sourcing an appropriate theoretical framework to provide structure and guidance in this research was vital. This doctoral research utilised a culturally appropriate figurative framework developed by Tongan academic Dr Konai Helu Thaman called the kakala. The kakala framework acknowledges the values and belief systems that are important to the Tongan people.

3.3 Kakala

Kakala in Tongan means fragrant flowers woven into a garland. A broader view of kakala includes *“fragrant fruit, leaves, and wood which have mythical or legendary origins”* (Thaman, 1992, p. 256). When considering the mythical or legendary origins of kava, this strengthens the apt pairing of kakala as a methodology when researching aspects of kava due to kava's legendary origins. A kakala is a garland/lei mainly made of flowers, leaves, and fruit. It is presented to someone special as a sign of 'ofa (love) and faka'apa'apa (respect). The process of making the garland is conducted in three stages.

1: Toli is the gathering and selection of flowers, fruit, leaves, and other desirable elements to be included in the kakala. Items are ranked in order of cultural importance and are chosen specifically for the design of the kakala with the recipient in mind (Vatuvei, 2017).

2: Tui is the stage where the flowers and other selected items are woven together to produce a kakala that is purposefully designed for a recipient (Vatuvei, 2017).

3: Luva is the final stage where the kakala is given or presented as a 'gift from the heart' to the honoured recipient (Vatuvei, 2017).

The kakala model was initially put together as a teaching and learning model by Professor Konai Helu-Thaman. As a research model for Pacific cultures, the original concept consisted of three components – Toli (picking and gathering of flowers – data collection), Tui (weaving the garland –

data analysis), and Luva (the gifting of the garland – dissemination of the research findings) (Naufahu, 2018). Since its creation, kakala has expanded to include three more stages which are:

4: Teu is the preparation and conceptualisation of the kakala. What is the purpose of the kakala? (Fua, 2014).

5: Mālie explores the relevance of the kakala/research and evaluates its' applicability (Fua, 2014).

6: Māfana questions, is its' application, and transformation sustainable? (Fua, 2014).

Encapsulating each stage is talanoa and tauhi vā. This is to ensure the relational space is strengthened and respected whilst establishing relationships with participants during the process of the research conceptualisation and implementation (McFall-McCaffery & Cook, 2016).

3.3.1 Teu: Conceptualisation and Preparing for the Research

When constructing a kakala, Teu is when the kakala maker is planning what design her kakala will entail specifically for the person for whom it will be presented. This is the stage where the researcher first conceives their research project and then prepares for the research through the conceptualisation of the research, its design, aim, rationale, and significance of the research (Fua, 2014).

For this doctoral research, Teu or conceptualisation of the research theoretically did not simply begin when the PhD proposal was submitted. In 2006 the researcher was first introduced to KRP through being part of the Mate Ma'a Tonga rugby league team, the Tongan Aotearoa Amateur Sports Association (TAASA), and working with Warriors/Kiwi rugby league players. Some of the men involved in these organisations in various capacities would consume kava for different reasons. Professional rugby league players that consumed kava often found it to be an essential part of their recovery program. Some clubs made it compulsory to attend kava group sessions post-games (NZ Herald, 2014). This aspect continued with the players who emigrated overseas to play in Europe and set up kava groups with their local league clubs. This ignited some curiosity for the researcher prompting her to explore the first research question - Is kava beneficial for rugby league players? The research then continued in the form of a BHSc Honours dissertation utilising data from the Pacific Island Family study, the researcher completed a longitudinal study on: 'Kava: A longitudinal study into kava consumption and emerging patterns of kava usage with subsequent effects on Pacific families living in South Auckland.' This was followed up in the researcher's MHSc thesis: 'Kava Survey Questionnaire: An exploratory study into the practices surrounding kava.' From the humble beginnings of a small assignment in the researcher's first year at university, this research has evolved to the point of now being a catalyst in the researcher continuing on this journey. The findings of the previous research studies led to talanoa exploring other facets of KRP. With the support of AUT supervisors, and the financial support of the Vice Chancellor's scholarship, the research started to evolve from a conceptualisation to reality and the PhD journey began.

The first 12 months were committed to completing the research proposal for submission to the AUT panel for approval. Through this process, there were some suggestions made by the panel to ensure that the research design was robust and would fill any knowledge gaps in current research. It is through this stage that the researcher needed to use self-reflection to satisfy her stringent criteria to undertake what felt like a daunting task. In this stressful environment feelings of not being Tongan enough surfaced and doubts of whether the researcher felt she was the right person to bring this voice out for the women was a factor in decision-making. The researcher's positionality encompassed her professional, personal, and cultural background.

As a senior counselling psychologist, the researcher has a holistic approach with those she works with and who are predominantly of Māori and Pacific descent. Developing a therapeutic relationship is the key to working with anyone and the researcher identifies that this has influenced how she has worked with the participants throughout this research. The researcher understands the importance of ensuring that the participants feel safe, feel heard, and feel empowered to share their truth, their understanding, and their relationship with kava related practices. Therefore, utilising methodologies such as talanoa and tauhi vā have been key factors in providing a space for the participants to share openly and honestly their experiences. Within the realm of talanoa are the tools of being mindfully present, fanongo (active listening), genuine positive regard, and being authentic as a researcher. This way of thinking aligns perfectly with the foundation upon which talanoa is built: faka'apa'apa (respect), loto fakatokilalo (humility), fe'ofa'aki (love, compassion), and feveitokai (caring, generosity). When the participants understood that the researcher genuinely cared about their experiences and if at any time they were concerned or uncomfortable, then the research process for them would stop because the participants health and wellbeing was more important than the research. This fostered an environment of mutual respect and reciprocity. Both participant and researcher gave of themselves and worked as a team to gather and co-create the information needed for this research.

As the researcher reflected on her cultural identity and standing within the Tongan community, it was evident the complexity of the researcher's positionality. This led to seeking counsel from Tongan community leaders, and open, honest self-reflection to identify and mitigate any potential biases or limitations such as cultural bias where it is essential to ensure cultural sensitivity and avoid misrepresentation. Addressing the researcher's positionality by engaging with the participants and ensuring that their voices and experiences are accurately represented, the researcher was able to enhance the validity and authenticity of the doctoral research and promote a respectful engagement with the Tongan community.

It is important to note that all participants in this doctoral research were referred to join the research by a mutual friend or colleague. This aspect played a significant role in strengthening the researcher-participant relationship, as the researcher's credibility and trustworthiness were validated by a third

party known to both the researcher and participant. Tauhi vā emphasises the importance of the research relationship. The establishment of a mutual respect for the research and the opportunity for participants to share their stories with the wider community laid a solid foundation for the formation and maintenance of Tauhi vā during the research process.

Before meeting with the potential participants, the researcher reached out to the participants either via phone or email and arranged a time to have a discussion and go through the information sheet with them. This was to ensure that they were fully informed regarding the research being conducted and the processes. Once they both agreed that the participant was fully informed about the proceedings and details of the research, the researcher sent via email, the consent form which was signed and returned via email for the zoom participants. For the in-person participants, the consent form was received in person. Right from the inception of the research it was imperative that there were no ruptures in the research relationship. Therefore, the researcher explained if the participant felt uncomfortable throughout any of the talanoa that we could pause or stop if necessary. To address a wide range of topics in this doctoral research, it was imperative to create a safe and supportive environment where participants could feel comfortable and be open about their experiences, should they choose to do so. The researcher, being a senior psychologist with extensive experience working primarily with the Pacific and Māori communities, likely instilled a sense of trust and security among the participants within this setting. Through utilising the Kakala framework, it is important to ensure the ethical foundations upon which Kakala is created, is adhered to. According to Fua (2014) these include: “*faka’apa’apa (respect), loto fakatokilalo (humility), fe’ofa’aki (love, compassion), and feveitokai (caring, generosity).*”

Once the talanoa with the participants began the connection between participant and researcher through their cultural connection was undeniable and forged a strong research-appropriate relationship. During the planning phase of this doctoral research, the researcher acknowledged the vital role of establishing strong relationships with the participants as a crucial factor in ensuring the successful gathering of information. In accordance with the anga faka-Tonga (the Tongan way), the researcher observes that the talanoa sessions were characterised by moments of laughter and a light-hearted atmosphere, fostering a deepened connection and rapport between the participants and the researcher. Anga faka Tonga within a kakala framework encompasses cultural values, practices, and traditions specific to the Tongan people. This included showing faka’apa’apa to the participants by using respectful polite language and demonstrating humility by expressing the value of being part of this research with the participant and the honour of hearing and sharing their experience. Faka’ofa’ofa (reciprocity) was incorporated through the participant sharing of their life experiences, and the researcher being able to give a me’a’ofa to honour the giving and receiving of their life experiences. For those who attended the talanoa in person, it included food either at a local restaurant (of their choice) or supplied by the researcher, and a choice of vouchers for their time. For those on zoom, they

received a voucher of their choosing. Before the official recording or commencement of the talanoa began, the researcher and participant talked openly about family and community connections. Part of the talanoa included discussion on fakatapu (spirituality) which enabled the participant and researcher to talanoa over things not only temporal but spiritual.

The response by the participants to the researcher allayed any fears that may have previously surfaced for the researcher and their Tongan heritage. They forged a connection that was authentic based on mutual respect and trust.

The planning stage of the research was crucial to ensure the outcome would provide an accurate portrayal of the participant's narrative. Like the planning stage of the kakala, constant reminding of who, how, and why this research was important strengthened the motivation for the researcher to forge ahead when times may become challenging. Understanding how the participants came to gain their knowledge around KRP, and how this impacted their perspective was through the philosophical underpinnings of this research, the ontological and epistemological philosophical aspects.

As stated by Quanchi (2004), knowledge passed through generations is ever evolving and impacted by acculturation such as the participants and their migration from Tonga to Aotearoa, and enculturation as knowledge is acquired by another culture such as the embracing of Christianity by many of the Tongan participants and their families. Therefore, utilising an ontology that embraces the uniqueness of the participants, and their learned experience has led to relativism as the ontology and constructivism as the epistemology. These philosophical ideologies fall under the overarching research framework of kakala.

Within the central research framework of kakala, the combination of relativism and constructivism allows for a nuanced and contextual exploration of the research topic. It enables researchers to consider the diverse perspectives and interpretations of participants, valuing their unique experiences and understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. This approach facilitates a deeper exploration of the complex and multi-faceted aspects of the research topic, while promoting inclusivity, respect, and an appreciation for the richness of individual perspectives.

3.4 Ontology: Relativism

Relativism as an ontological theoretical framework suggests that there is not one singular version of reality. Truth is shaped by context and does not exist without meaning. It asserts that reality is inherently subjective and varies depending on different perspectives, cultural contexts, and individual experiences. Reality is viewed as a socially constructed and context-dependent phenomenon, shaped by diverse cultural, historical, and individual factors. Relativism challenges the notion of an objective reality independent of human perception and emphasizes the importance of acknowledging and respecting multiple interpretations and understandings of the world. In this research, a participant's

reality is constructed through their social constructs and dependent on the context of values and perceptions forged through their cultural, societal, and family belief systems. They are created and maintained through socialization processes, language, and shared meanings attributed by individuals and groups. Social constructs can be influential in shaping our perceptions, behaviours, and interactions within society, and they often reflect power dynamics and societal hierarchies.

When it comes to examining women consuming kava. For all the participants, their understanding and decision-making around women consuming kava were influenced by their values and the ideology they were taught or learned through their own experiences. This led them to make their judgment on whether they support or oppose women consuming kava. The participants who were raised in a culture where their family and societal norms advocated women consuming kava either became kava consumers themselves or were supportive of those women who chose to consume kava. What they observed growing up influenced how they viewed KRP. It was envisioned that there would be similarities yet many differences between the participants' narratives throughout this doctoral research based on their perception of reality and the lens through which they view the world.

With relativism as the ontology, it blends naturally into constructivism as the epistemology. Relativism and constructivism share the fundamental idea that reality and knowledge are not fixed or objective, but rather shaped by human perceptions, interpretations, and social interactions. They both reject the notion of a single, universal truth and instead emphasise the diversity of perspectives and understandings. In this doctoral research, we can see that each participant's reality and how they perceive their reality is unique to them and is constructed through their interactions with people, communities, and their culture. The combination of relativism as an ontological framework and constructivism as an epistemological framework allows for a multifaceted understanding of how reality is perceived and constructed, highlighting the contextual and individual nature of knowledge, and accentuating the role of individuals and their social interactions in shaping their understanding of the world.

3.5 Epistemology: Constructivism

Constructivism, as an epistemology, claims that knowledge is actively constructed by individuals based on their personal experiences, interactions, and perception of the world. It stresses the role of social and cognitive processes in shaping knowledge and understanding.

When relativism is combined with constructivism, it reinforces the idea that reality is not fixed or predetermined but is instead socially constructed through human perception and interpretation. Constructivism highlights the active role of individuals and communities in creating meaning and knowledge, while relativism recognizes the diversity of interpretations and perspectives that contribute to the construction of reality. In this sense, constructivism aligns with relativism by acknowledging that knowledge and understanding are not objective or universal, but are influenced by

subjective experiences, cultural contexts, and social interactions. Both perspectives reject the notion of a single, objective truth and emphasize the importance of considering multiple perspectives and interpretations in the construction of knowledge.

According to Honebein (1996), constructivism is an approach that emphasizes how one constructs their understanding and knowledge of the world through what they experience and then reflects on those experiences. Kalender (2007) suggests that from a constructivist perspective, knowledge is discovered through experimentation and doing. Fairburn-Dunlop (2014) proposes that the construction of new knowledge is based on a foundation of identity which enables one to connect across a range of situations and spaces including cultural, and social. Simply, new knowledge is built or constructed upon existing knowledge that is unique to everyone. This is an active process and includes being actively involved in one's learning process which is enhanced through interpersonal connectedness and the context we perceive the new information.

Constructivism is an appropriate epistemological theory for this specific research as the researcher was seeking to understand how the participants made sense of KRP. Participants' experiences may be likened to that of fellow Tongan Ikanamoe Ma'u who was raised in a traditional Tongan family. However, she chose a non-traditional pathway to forge her new perspective on KRP by choosing to consume kava (Ma'u, 2017). Constructivism enables us to learn how participants may decide to break away from tradition and what experiences and influences contributed to that decision. This interaction with the social world is how one constructs reality and is a fundamental characteristic of qualitative research (Merriam & Tisdell 2016).

3.6 Paradigm: Qualitative

A paradigm is a set of beliefs that underpin the research design (Kivunja, 2017). Utilising qualitative as a paradigm assumes that there is an underlying belief that the research will explore how participants make sense of their lived experiences. The researcher is the main device in collecting the data, the researcher interacts with the participants, the researcher is interested in the process, and the researcher through the inductive process will build concepts and theories from the data gathered from the participants. Fraenkel (2005a) states qualitative research is characterised by studying real-life situations with openness to undetermined outcomes. It is a holistic, inductive process aimed at providing a rich and meaningful description of unique and context-specific dialogue. The design is fluid and unrestricted by rigid frameworks which foster a research process that enhances the emergence of new information (Fraenkel 2005b). New information bridges knowledge gaps and provides information that may enhance existing research. Qualitative research is non-linear, and this is particularly relevant for researchers working with Pacific participants. Vaioleti (2006), suggests a non-linear research response are qualities that may appeal to indigenous populations as oratory traditions may be more suited to the qualitative approach. By utilising a qualitative paradigm to guide

the research approach, an open unassuming approach that values the participant and their journey of discovery are explored. This will provide a rich and meaningful construct of knowledge gained through experience and then described to enhance specific topical information. A challenge for many qualitative researchers, is establishing rapport with their participants and identifying ethical dilemmas that may arise (Nagata, Kohn-Wood, & Suzuki, 2012). When forming relationships with participants and communities, an essential part of the process is for the researcher to consistently reflect on their approach and engagement with their participants. Complex challenges may arise when researching a specific demographic such as the Tongan women in this research. Self-reflection will be crucial and more effective when it becomes an automatic act to reflect on the research process (Nagata et al., 2012).

Amatya (2011), describes a qualitative researcher as being like a bricoleur that searches for a construct of underlying patterns which produce results, understanding, and creation of underlying themes that provide answers to concrete situations that emerge as a result of the bricoleur's methods. A bricoleur is someone who can take resources at hand and find solutions to existing issues. The researcher is fluid as they employ tools, strategies, methods, and materials as required to meet the needs of the participant (Amatya, 2011). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) suggest that qualitative researchers are interested in how the participant interprets their experiences, how they take this knowledge and construct their worldview, and what this experience means to them.

Vaioliti (2006) states that previous research undertaken with Pacific peoples has been 'disempowering' with little social or economic benefit for the participant or their community. This particular research is committed to sharing information from the participant that may be of benefit to the wider Tongan community. Post-research feedback from participants supports this approach and has been encouraging the researcher to continue with this approach in future research.

3.7 Methodological Approach:

When research involves participants descended from the Pacific, it is beneficial to participants and researchers to utilise a theoretical model that aligns with Pacific values and world views. A qualitative paradigm is an effective platform to build upon with a Talanoa methodological approach. By combining the qualitative paradigm with a Talanoa methodological approach, researchers can delve into the richness of participants' stories, explore the contextual intricacies, and foster meaningful dialogue that amplifies diverse voices and perspectives. This synergistic approach provides a powerful platform to generate nuanced understandings and capture the depth of human experiences. Talanoa encourages researcher and participant rapport building that may require flexibility in approach to be effective in gathering contextual rich information. Synthesising the qualitative paradigm with the talanoa methodology was envisaged to strengthen the research approach and empower participants. Talanoa methodology focuses on the gathering of information therefore, to include a methodology

that is centred on building and maintaining the relationship in a research-enhancing environment has led to the inclusion of Tauhi vā as a methodological approach. A relationship that acknowledges the concept of Tauhi vā may be considered a paradigm of building, creating, and maintaining, new relationships (Ilaiu, n.d.).

As a methodological approach, Tauhi vā emphasises the importance of creating and nurturing respectful, reciprocal, and meaningful relationships between the researcher and participant. Tauhi vā encompasses the significance of cultural values, protocols, and perspective that contribute to shaping the research methods. As research methods align with the research processes in a cultural context, it ensures cultural sensitivity and ethical considerations are incorporated.

Tauhi vā encourages a collaborative approach as participant and researcher actively engage in the research process through the sharing of knowledge, experiences, and fostering a sense of shared responsibility. This is enhanced through the building and maintaining of the research relationship which is established by open, honest, and transparent communication and engagement. By utilising a Tauhi vā methodological approach, it enables the researcher to foster meaningful relationships, co-create knowledge, and promote ethical research practice that will strengthen the voice of the participant and empower the community they represent.

This section discusses the purpose of utilising talanoa and tauhi vā as the ideal methodological approaches implemented in this doctoral research.

3.7.1 Talanoa

According to Vaioleti (2006), employing a methodology such as talanoa combined with an appropriate researcher fosters an environment where Pacific participants feel able to be authentic with their knowledge, and therefore create possible answers to Pacific issues. Fa'avae, Jones, and Manu'atu (2016) state the foundation of talanoa is the building of relationships. Ka'ili (2017) identifies the faikava as a place where participants create harmonious symmetrical sociospatial relationships as they share openly with one another through the process of talanoa. This highlights the benefits of utilising a talanoa methodological research design for KRP that has already been identified as effective in other KRP settings.

Understanding the root of the word talanoa provides a base foundation for why this researcher has opted for utilising talanoa as a methodology. Vaioleti (2006) states that the word talanoa consists of two parts; *tala* means informal discussion, retelling experiences, and information whilst *noa* means ordinary, common, imaginary, and nothing. Therefore, talanoa means '*talking about nothing in particular and interacting without a rigid framework*' (Vaioleti, 2006, p. 23).

Talanoa refers to a research approach that is rooted in Pacific Island cultures, particularly in the Pacific concept of dialogue and storytelling. It involves creating a safe and inclusive space for

participants to engage in open, respectful, and reciprocal dialogue, allowing for the sharing of personal experiences, knowledge, and perspectives. Talanoa as a methodology emphasizes the relational aspects of research, cultural understandings, and co-creation of knowledge. It has been suggested that talanoa is the *'process of storytelling without concealment'* (Halapua, 2013, p. 1). The process of being open with one's experience stresses the importance of *noa* in which there is a need for the participant and researcher to detach from preconceived ideology about oneself, which fosters an environment where there is a *'sense of belonging together in noa with no predetermined schedule outline'* (Halapua, 2013, p.3). Talanoa encourages fluidity of the relationship between participant and researcher to enhance cohesive harmonious interactions. As the research relationship develops, the information sought is more likely to be forthcoming. The *'integrity and dynamics'* of this process will naturally lead to the development of some form of agenda through which all involved will feel a sense of ownership of the process and outcome (Halapua, 2013, p. 2).

Research has *'revealed the growing number of Pacific academics working toward models of engagement and empowerment for positive change. It is not limited to those of Pacific ancestry but is widely encouraged for those with Pacific interests in mind'* (Ponton, 2018, p. 7) In a study conducted by Suaalii-Sauni, et al. (2009), qualitative data was sought to gain insight into the perceptions of Pacific peoples regarding their experience with Pacific mental health services including ideology, and implementation of Pacific specific services employed in the recovery process. Various health models were utilised, and participants expressed that what made the models Pacific was the emphasis on a holistic approach and the equivalence of spiritual and physical needs (Suaalii-Sauni et al., 2009). Several Pacific-specific models provide an effective framework for various areas of research including Karl Pulotu-Endemann's Fonofale model; Sione Tu'itahi's Fonua model; and Konai Helu-Thaman's Kakala model. These models have been developed with a specific focus on alignment with Pacific values and belief systems. Suaalii-Sauni, et al. (2009), suggest that the increasing Pacific population born in Aotearoa, may identify more with non-Pacific, and it is beneficial to review the current Pacific models for their *'appropriateness to the Pacific population as a whole.'* Tunufa'i (2016) brings attention to the disadvantage of using a 'pan-Pacific' approach as some participants may feel excluded or disempowered.

The researcher found utilising talanoa as a methodological approach was advantageous in creating a fluid conversation that despite being non-linear, the process enabled a forthcoming of rich information. Talanoa supports a holistic connection between participant and researcher that extends beyond the boundaries of the topical conversation and forges into areas that form multiple layers of the topic at hand. Like a bricoleur. This may be seen through the encouragement of storytelling and not restricting the participant's organic narrative to flow in the form of oration. According to Vaka, Brannelly, and Huntington (2016), Pacific peoples do not focus on a single subject matter, it is the layers that contribute to their knowledge, their connection, and their experience with that subject that

are expressed through talanoa. Talanoa allows participants and researchers to connect across many facets within the research realm that may otherwise go unexplored if there is too much structure or limitations in place such as time or content. Multiple questions are often answered because of the free-flowing discussion that Talanoa encourages and therefore, the talanoa process becomes more time efficient as multiple aspects are discussed simultaneously.

Talanoa is a methodology that encompasses a range of tools and techniques to facilitate meaningful dialogue and engagement. It provides a framework for conducting research in a culturally sensitive and inclusive manner, allowing participants to have an active role in shaping the research process and co-creating knowledge. As a tool, Talanoa refers to the specific techniques and practices used within the methodology to facilitate dialogue and engagement. These techniques may include active listening, open-ended questioning, storytelling, and the use of metaphors or proverbs to convey ideas. Talanoa as a tool enables participants to express themselves, share their narratives, and contribute to the research process. Overall, Talanoa is a methodology that encompasses a range of tools and techniques to facilitate meaningful dialogue and engagement.

Utilising another model to support the talanoa methodology to enhance the overall research design and Pacific values led the researcher to identify and utilise tauhi vā as a methodology. Talanoa, as a methodology was the vehicle to gather the information whilst the tauhi vā methodology, was how the interaction and connection between researcher and participant was built, and nurtured. This enhanced the talanoa and forthcoming data vital for the research.

3.7.2 Tauhi vā

Tauhi vā is a pillar of Tongan society and an important factor in any relationship. Tauhi vā emphasises the relational space that connects people and nurtures the relationship (Ka'ili, 2005). According to 'Ilaiu (n.d.), tauhi is the building or creating of the relational space whereas vā is the relational space. Ka'ili (2005) suggests that tauhi means to maintain or nurture and vā is the space in-between therefore when there is a mutual exchange of tauhi vā there will be a harmonious interaction or connection between those present. Tauhi vā is a fundamental concept that embodies the principles of mutual respect, reciprocity, and caring for one another. This concept is closely intertwined with Tongan ethics, which are deeply rooted in traditional values, cultural norms, and spiritual beliefs. Tongan ethics emphasise virtues such as faka'apa'apa (respect), loto fakatokilalo (humility), fe'ofa'aki (love, compassion), and feveitokai (caring, generosity). By upholding Tauhi vā and adhering to Tongan ethics, Tauhi vā is a methodological approach contributes to the overall wellbeing and social cohesion of the research relationship, fostering a sense of unity and interconnectedness. Maintaining harmonious relationships may include loyalty, commitment, and genuine care for one another. Hence, the tauhi vā methodology honours both participant and researcher through the development of a mutually respectful relationship that will bring forth comprehensive information

about the participant. This includes acceptance that tā (time) and vā (space) may need to be extended to nurture the research relationship. Ka'ili (2017) explains this through one of the legends of the demigod Maui:

‘Moanan elders also reveal that in ancient times Tongans could not walk upright because the langi (sky) was too close to the earth. People had to crawl from one place to another. One day Maui (demigod) was returning home from his plantation in the Lalofonua (underworld). He was thirsty and noticed an elderly woman with a hohoni (coconut shell jug) of water. Maui asked the woman for water to quench his thirst. The woman reminded him that she had to crawl a long way to get her water. She asked Maui to push up the sky (extended space), and in return, she would give him some of her water. Maui pushed up the sky, and the elderly woman gave Maui a drink from her jug. Since that day, the sky remains high, giving people enough space to walk upright’ (Ka’ili, 2017, p. 18).

According to Ka’ili (2017), the act of crawling may be symbolic of oppression between commoners and chiefs. By freeing the common people from oppression, they were able to build harmonious relationships with the chiefs. As researchers and participants come together, they are equal and work collaboratively to achieve the outcome they both desire. Neither voice is to be oppressed or felt like they are inferior to the other. The extension of time, and space, combined with interpersonal relationships are key components of implementing tauhi vā effectively. As Tongan people meet for the first time, areas of commonality and genealogical connections that encompass where we come from, who we know, and where we have been, are seeking to build a connection with one another. This building of a relationship was factored into the time set aside for talanoa sessions. Effective rapport-building is something that should not be rushed due to time constraints. Of course, it was necessary to have a time limit to the sessions however, to be able to achieve the desired outcome, it was important to invest in the building of the research relationship to gather in-depth data.

3.7.3 The Talanoa/Tauhi Vā Process Online

During the research process, it was evident that with COVID-19 restrictions there would need to be online talanoa. This was a new experience for some with the talanoa being conducted via zoom. The thought of creating harmonious tauhi vā online incited a little concern in the initial stages. However, there was more interaction through email to set up the online process which enabled minor dialogue between participant and researcher so that when they met online, they had already formed a small connection. As participant and researcher began their talanoa they found common ground where they connected either through cultural, social, or ancestral ties. This provided a foundation and created an environment for the research to be conducted in an environment of mutual respect, and a desire to

share the experience and narrative of the participant. Tauhi vā in this research supported a socio-spatial space of genuine positive regard for each other which was conducive to the positive outcome of the research. Participants felt they could share their experiences, perceptions, and understanding of the involvement with KRP free from judgment or criticism.

3.8 Methods:

The method section is how the research process was implemented. This section comprises the sample that was recruited, the way the data was collected using individual talanoa, talanoa faka'eke'eke, ethical considerations, risk management, and the complications that have impacted data collection due to COVID-19. The Tui or data analysis phase utilises thematic analysis and then discusses the potential and significance of this research along with the final phases of kakala: Luva, Mālie, and Māfana.

3.8.1 Sample

Purposive sampling is employed to identify and recruit participants based on the aim of the research and prior knowledge of the research demographic (Fraenkel, 2005b). The sample consisted of 10 Tongan women who are currently living in Aotearoa and meet the inclusion criteria comprising of being 18+ years of age and previously or currently involved in KRPs either as a tou'a, kava consumer, or the spouse of a Tongan male kava consumer. Sample size considered the nature of the research, the study design, and the quality of the data being sought.

3.8.2 Recruitment

Personal networks including social media, church groups, members of the local Tongan community, and word of mouth were used to raise awareness of the research. Once a potential participant had indicated an interest in the study, they were sent an information pack detailing the research purpose, the aim of the study, and the requirements they needed to uphold if agreeing to participate. They then had the option to respond through email, phone, text, or Facebook messenger to express their interest. The primary researcher made contact with the potential participant via phone, messenger, or email, and arranged a meeting to discuss with them any questions or concerns they had. Participants targeted were born either in Tonga or Aotearoa, currently or have been involved in KRP, and are confident in their command of the English language. For the spouse of the male kava consumer, the male must have previously been a kava consumer, but it was not essential that he still is. Table 2 shows the number of participants and which category they were assigned to:

Table 2

Participant Classification

Number of Participants	Role
3	Tongan female kava consumers
3	Tongan female spouse of Tongan male kava consumer.
4	Tongan tou'a.

Research Participant Demographics

A questionnaire provided information regarding basic demographics which included the following:

- Name
- Place of birth
- Date of birth
- Ethnic groups, identify with
- Languages they feel competent in
- Where they live (not address)
- If not born in Aotearoa, when did they arrive here.
- Religion
- Marital status
- Occupation
- Highest level of education

The compilation of Table 3 and the demographics of the participants were kept basic to protect the identity of the participant as much as possible. Pseudonyms were used and some demographics were omitted such as religion, and occupation.

Table 3**Participant Demographics**

#	Birthplace	Languages Fluent	Age	Marital Status
Consumer				
Ane	Aotearoa	Tongan/ English	23	Single
Lose	Tonga	Tongan/ English	48	Married
‘Alisi	Tonga	Tongan/ English	50	Single
Tou’a				
Langi	Tonga	Tongan/ English	49	Separated
Seini	Tonga	Tongan/ English	48	Married
Sela	Tonga	Tongan/ English	33	Single
Siu	Tonga	Tongan/ English	31	Single
Spouse				
Sina	Tonga	Tongan/ English	41	Married
Nisi	Tonga	Tongan/ English	51	Married
Vina	Tonga	Tongan/ English	50	Married

3.8.3 Toli - Data Collection

Toli entails the skill of acquiring, sorting, and choosing flowers that are ideal for the kakala and are not damaged during the process. The person making the kakala searches for the most appropriate items that would suit her kakala design, keeping in mind who it will be presented to. Thaman (1992) emphasises the importance of knowing what items to use, how to obtain them, and how to store them. This requires the researcher to skilfully gather the information whilst being culturally and ethically appropriate (Malungahu et al., 2017). Implementing individual talanoa was an effective way of gathering information and exploring participants' views and experiences. Like gathering flowers for the garland, a researcher searches for participants and gathers authentic information upon which to build the research. Knowing how to handle the kakala items and taking care to not damage the items may be likened to the utilisation of information packs, gaining informed consent, and providing opportunities for the participant to ask questions before the research talanoa began. This was to mitigate any form of harm to the participants. Before conducting any talanoa, the researcher discussed

the following with the participant as outlined by the American Psychological Association (Smith, 2003):

- The purpose of the research, how long it will take, and the procedures.
- The rights participant has, to decline or withdraw from the research once it has started.
- Informed consent
- Foreseeable factors that may influence their participation include potential risk, discomfort, or adverse effects.
- Confidentiality includes breaching confidentiality.
- Incentives for participation
- Contact details if the participant has any questions.

Following this protocol alleviated any possible concerns, risk factors, or ethical dilemmas that may have arisen. The talanoa and tauhi vā approach foster an environment where an open discussion was encouraged between participant and researcher. This doctoral research is a collaborative process through participants contributing their KRP narrative, enabling the researcher to record, analyse the data, write the doctoral thesis, and disseminate the findings. Discussing the research procedures and expectations was an important factor of the talanoa and tauhi vā process to develop and strengthen the research relationship.

3.8.4 Individual Talanoa

The purpose of this research is to gather the participant's views, experiences, beliefs, and opinions on KRPs. Choosing to utilise individual talanoa provides an opportunity to hear an individual's unique experience. Lopez and Whitehead (2013) suggest that individual qualitative data enable the participant to express their ideas and allow the researcher to pursue a line of questioning whilst being responsive to the differences of each participant and their circumstances. Employing a semi-structured approach to provide specific topical questions may be employed to pursue specific information more in-depth (Gill, Stewart, Treasure & Chadwick, 2008).

Beginning the talanoa with rapport-building conversation such as making connections or links to how the participant and researcher became involved in this doctoral research provided an opportunity for the participant and researcher to establish a research relationship that was conducive to the talanoa research approach. As the relationship developed, the talanoa organically flowed into a semi-structured style that enabled both researcher and participant to talanoa on a broad range of topics that was consistent across all participants. According to Lopez and Whitehead (2013), a combination of unstructured and semi-structured interviews stimulate dialogue, are flexible, and ensure pursuit of questions related to the discussion. As talanoa faka'eke'eke was utilised, it was effective in extracting each participant's unique experience around a specific topic.

3.8.5 Talanoa Faka'eke'eke

Talanoa faka'eke'eke was implemented as a method to investigate and explore specific topical areas. Talanoa faka'eke'eke is broadly translated as the way of verbal searching, interviewing, or questioning (Vaioleti, 2016). This type of talanoa is researcher directed and is effective when seeking specific information (Vaioleti, 2016). Because the research had some topical questions to be explored, utilising talanoa faka'eke'eke was an apt method to investigate and explore these areas of interest. Talanoa faka'eke'eke enabled the researcher to pursue a line of questioning and dependent upon the responses of the participant, was able to make links between multiple responses.

The researcher was aware that talanoa faka'eke'eke was a term used when police would interrogate a suspect. Therefore, the researcher was mindful of the intent of the research and honouring the tauhi vā methodology which includes nurturing the relationship with warmth (māfana) and genuine positive regard. The researcher regularly checked in with participants to make sure they would not feel like they were being exploited or there was a power imbalance. Maintaining a harmonious research relationship whilst pursuing a line of questioning is crucial. As time was limited between 60-90 minutes, this approach enabled the researcher to gather a wide range of in-depth information within the timeframe.

Once the talanoa was completed and the data was collected, participants were assigned a number code that was unique to them and only known to the researcher. This is to protect the participant from any unforeseen risk factors that the dissemination of this doctoral research may incur. All data collected is kept locked on the computer.

3.9 Ethics Approval

Ethics was approved by AUTEK on July 10, 2020, with further amendments to include online talanoa approved on August 31, 2020.

When participants were recruited, they were informed of the expectations regarding participation and confidentiality required within this doctoral research. The researcher felt confidentiality needed to be explained explicitly to the participants clearly and concise so that they felt comfortable enough to share their stories knowing that their identity would remain anonymous except for those involved in the research team.

The participant's experience in this research was valuable and it was desirable to convey to the participants that it was a privilege for this research to have their contribution. The researcher's approach throughout this study honoured the participant/researcher relationship by prioritising the participant's introduction into the talanoa to build rapport, and ensure the participant was well informed regarding their participation. Talanoa and tauhi vā are steeped in protocols surrounding developing and strengthening relationships. The aim and purpose of the research were transparent,

and participants were encouraged to ask any questions or seek clarification at any time throughout the talanoa. The utilisation of the Kakala research framework, coupled with the methodologies of Talanoa and Tauhi vā, guided by the principles of Tongan ethical protocols, played a pivotal role in accessing and gaining invaluable traditional knowledge shared by the participants. As a result, the researcher was able to surpass initial expectations, gathering a wealth of information and gaining unique insights that are may have not been accessed in a conventional research setting.

3.9.1 Risk Management

This talanoa is a participant focused and all possible procedures were in place to ensure confidentiality and manage any perceived risk factors. Discussing the research together and providing an environment where the participant feels comfortable to raise any questions or concerns was paramount.

Utilising a talanoa and tauhi vā methodology strengthens relationships between participant and researcher honouring the equality of the relationship through mutual respect, openness, and honesty. The participants were made aware from the onset that they may withdraw from the research at any stage if they are uncomfortable with the process. The privacy of the participant is crucial especially as this may be perceived as a sensitive topic to some members of the community. Allotting numbers to participants and only the research team having access to participants' names, will minimise harm. Talanoa honours cultural diversity and respect for all participants regardless of their ethnicity. By utilising talanoa, it is expected that the participant will feel valued, and respected throughout the entire process. A key component is providing a space to meet that is comfortable, clean, tidy, and has good food provided as that is a key aspect of Tongan culture when we gather.

With all precautions in place and honouring talanoa, there was a possibility that the content of this research may cause distress for the participant. From the onset, the researcher endeavoured to reassure the participant that if at any time during the talanoa they felt uncomfortable, then it was ok to stop and take a moment to gather their thoughts and proceed when they were ready. None of the participants expressed any form of distress during the talanoa. If participants felt any distress post-talanoa, then the information pack contained the contact details to access AUT Health Counselling and Wellbeing services.

3.9.2 COVID-19 Complications for Data Collection

The data collection phase was delayed due to COVID-19 in Aotearoa. COVID-19 brought some challenges that had not been seen or experienced as a global entity, and in the research community in Aotearoa. Therefore, with lockdowns being enforced and many fearing the unknown consequences of the Delta strain, people were no longer able to connect in person with people outside of their bubble.

Follow-up with the participants became necessary as contact had been made before Tamaki Makaurau went into lockdown level four for a second time during the scheduled talanoa.

It was important to find ways to adapt to the new challenge of COVID-19 which meant applying for inclusion in the ethics application to allow for online talanoa via zoom when needed. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, AUT policy states that until we reach Level 1 or 0, there will be no face-to-face data gathering. This impacted the researcher's original timeline and the completion date needed to be extended by three months. This made it necessary to reach out to the participants and give them the option to conduct the talanoa online via zoom or wait to meet face-to-face. Online talanoa became an extension of the in-person talanoa and included video access and recording consent from the participant. COVID-19 generated an urgency to develop alternative ways to gather data. According to Fa'avae et al (2022), consideration needed to be given to navigating the talanoa, and tauhi vā (relationship) in an online forum that ensures the integrity, and sustainability of the interactions in the research space is upheld. Allowing extra time to develop the research/participant relationship online was effective in building and maintaining the relationship. When the levels were reduced, other guidelines became necessary to follow to keep participants and researchers as safe as possible from spreading the COVID-19 virus. This included one-meter distancing of all present during talanoa, use of hand sanitiser before and after talanoa by participant and researcher, spraying of surfaces where necessary, and making sure that individual participant talanoa meetings are spaced apart to ensure the room was cleaned between each talanoa. Seven of the ten participants were able to have talanoa in person and three were conducted via zoom due to Tamaki Makaurau going into lockdown for a second time.

3.10 Tui - Data Analysis

Tui has several meanings in the Tongan language however, in this research it is the meaning of the threading together a garland of flowers. Tui is the phase of positioning, threading, and weaving the garland. Malungahu et al., (2017) suggest that this is the phase where the researcher identifies categories and themes, generating new knowledge. During this phase the researcher was continuously checking and re-checking information, reflecting on the research question, and striving to make sense of the data as it was being formulated into a thesis. This phase was time-consuming. Nevertheless, like the stringing of the kakala, it takes a focused effort to identify details that encapsulate the relevant data. This requires skill and knowledge which may be inept at the onset nonetheless, as the researcher becomes familiar with the data set, knowledge and skills are developed.

According to Vaka et al. (2016), new knowledge is gained through talanoa on specific topical questions which are then analysed for themes and patterns linked to the research question. Thematic analysis conducted whilst acknowledging the core values of Tongan society ensured the research was culturally appropriate and honoured the *anga faka-Tonga* (Tongan way of life). The core values or

pou (pillars) of Tongan society are displayed in Figure 2 along with their meaning in English. ‘Ofa (love, care, and kindness) is the philosophical ground upon which Faa’i Kavei Koula ‘a e Tonga (Tonga’s Pillars) stand (Famili Lelei, 2012).

Table 4

Faa’i Kavei Koula ‘a e Tonga: The Pillars of Tongan Society

Faa’i Kavei Koula ‘a e Tonga	The Pillars of Tongan Society
Faka’apa’apa:	Acknowledging and returning respect
Anga fakatokilalo/loto tō:	Humility, and is open to learning
Tauhi vaha’a/vā:	Keeping the relationship ongoing, alive and well
Mamahi’i me’a:	One’s loyalty and passion.

Note: Adapted from (Fāmili lelei, 2012, p. 13).

An inductive approach in the analysis of the data was applied within the kakala framework. The tui stage applies to organising the information and weaving it together to make an appropriate kakala for the recipient. In this stage, the flowers of the garland would be sorted, and selection would be made on cultural importance, the occasion, and who the recipient is. Utilising an appropriate method of analysing the data and selecting the data to include in this doctoral research is not only culturally important but, academically significant as well.

3.10.1 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is a method of identifying, analysing, and then reporting patterns or themes within the data set to give rich detail and a variety of aspects on a specific research topic (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This approach aligns with the qualitative paradigm where engagement with the participant provides rich data for quality analysis. When analysing participants' transcripts, words and sentences that have similar meanings are identified and assigned codes that enable segments of the transcript to be linked to themes (Belotto, 2018). In this research thematic analysis was conducted using a six-phase process as described by Braun and Clarke (2012):

- Phase 1: Data familiarisation – Reread transcripts several times immersing oneself in the data.

The first step was to transcribe the data. This can be a laborious task and can prove challenging to some researchers. However, if the focus remains on the purpose and aim of the research, and the importance of conveying the experiences of the participants, then it is crucial for researchers to persevere. Transcribing the data onto a computer file makes it accessible on the computer and also has the benefit of being printed as a hard copy providing alternative ways to read through and familiarise oneself with the data.

- Phase 2: Generate initial codes - Organise data into meaningful groups.

Coding for the researcher was considered a respite after the time-consuming task of transcribing. Initial codes were sorted into the areas of the topical questions. In the first stage of this phase, the transcribed data was read and coded into general topics that were being naturally extracted. Initially, there was many codes that were grouped under themes.

- Phase 3: Search for Themes – Sort codes into broad potential themes

Manifest content was the surface-level codes that were more obvious to the researcher than the latent content which took more time to bring codes out to the forefront identifying the deeper underlying content. For example, motivating factors were not a topical question. However, during the coding phase, it became apparent that this was an underlying theme that impacted the participant's decision-making processes.

- Phase 4: Review Potential Themes – Review and refine themes to create coherent patterns.

Once codes were identified themes came to the forefront and these were then either combined, split, or discarded regarding the relevance of the concept or idea. At this stage, the researcher felt it necessary to revisit the transcripts and recordings to ensure that the codes being extracted were aligned with what the participants were saying and that the themes that were being extracted during the data analysis process were accurate.

- Phase 5: Defining and Naming Themes – Clearly ‘define and refine’ the ‘essence’ of themes.

This stage was where the story started to develop, and the themes became clear through sifting the data content. This was then assigned to a clear theme. This phase was not something that was completed until finishing the end of the final draft. Themes began to meld into each other and there were crossovers in the themes. Nevertheless, there came a point where a decision was made to include or exclude a theme. A theme was excluded if it was referenced in another theme. This phase was ongoing and did not stop until the final report was written.

- Phase 6: Produce Report – Concise, coherent, and logical presentation of the analysed data.

Research with talanoa methods generated a considerable amount of data. Talanoa’s philosophical base is adept at bringing participants' voices to the forefront and adding authenticity to the study through the participant’s cultural perceptions (Vaioleti, 2016). Thematic analysis, kakala, and talanoa guided by the four core values of Tongan society provided an effective process for analysing the data gathered. The step-by-step process of thematic analysis was not linear. It consisted of going back and forward through the data working tirelessly to generate themes and assessing which codes were null and void, and which codes supported central themes that were being generated from the data set.

This was a time-consuming phase and despite reading copious amounts on thematic analysis and watching presentations, nothing prepares one for the time committed to this phase of the research. What made this time-consuming was the desire of the researcher to represent the participant's narrative to decipher what themes extracted were an accurate depiction of what the participants were sharing. Listening to the recorded talanoa several times enabled the researcher to stay in touch with the data. Hearing the participant's voices and listening to their lived experience again increased the desire and motivation to get the participant's voices out into the wider community.

Once transcripts were completed it was important to go through the process of triangulation. In thematic analysis, the process of triangulation involves multiple steps to ensure the validity and reliability of the analysis and the emerging themes. Triangulation helps to strengthen the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings.

After transcribing the individual talanoa, the researcher followed up by sending the transcripts to the respective participants via email. This step aimed to give participants an opportunity to review and provide feedback on the accuracy and reliability of the transcriptions, ensuring that their experiences and perspectives were appropriately represented. Participants were encouraged to make any necessary corrections or amendments to the transcripts. Upon receiving the transcripts, all participants stated it was accurate and did not request any modifications. This process of participant validation further strengthened the credibility of the transcripts that informed this doctoral research.

3.11 Potential Significance and Benefits of this Research:

The final three phases of the kakala framework are luva, mālie, and māfana. From the beginning phase, the focus was on the recipient of the kakala. Luva is when the kakala is finally presented to the recipient. Mālie is evaluating the relevancy of the research and reflecting if the research was effective in obtaining the outcome desired. Māfana is assessing if the research is transformative and sustainable.

3.11.1 Luva: A Gift from the Heart

According to Thaman (1992), the kakala not being retained for long and is always given away. The focus on the production of the kakala from the onset has been on the recipient. When making the kakala, there has been many sacrifices, commitment, humility, and genuine respect for this research from the participants and researcher (Fua, 2014). During the research, the researcher discussed with her mother that her name was so 'pālāgi' and she wanted a Tongan second name to reflect her Tongan heritage. Her mother gave her a name that was special to her tupu'anga (ancestor) and one that she believed the researcher was worthy to carry on. It is 'Peau 'Ave Ika ki Moana' (Waves sending fish into the deep ocean). Her mother shared that when she lived in Vava'u there were times when the waves would wash an abundance of fish up on the beach. The locals would gather the fish they

needed to feed their families and others in their village. They would then put the excess back into the ocean.

The people of the Pacific have lived closely with the ocean for centuries, making it their home. They are custodians of the ocean. In times of plenty the ocean offers up its resources and the people of the Pacific take what they need, and the rest, the waves take back for replenishment. To give freely by nature and taken with care by man to use for the benefit of mankind. As the researcher would talanoa with her mother about this research, her mother said that the researcher was like the wave that brought the fish in to feed the people. This wave of newfound information would feed new knowledge to the community.

When this research was conducted, the researcher was invested in this project and is passionate about the findings that have been extracted. It was important for the researcher to be aware of the biases or pre-set ideologies and assumptions she may have when conducting the research. As with the kakala, the luva phase according to Vaoleti (2006) is presented and based upon the Tongan values of 'ofa (love), faka'apa'apa (respect), and fetokoni'aki (reciprocity and responsibility for each other). The researcher felt a responsibility to the participants to share their narratives, and therefore felt it was important for her to self-reflect regularly on the research process as a whole to ensure the recipients would feel this doctoral research represented their voice accurately. Recipients in the wider community may embrace the research and provide opportunities to discuss the findings. Some women may resonate with participants' experiences and find forums opening up for them to share their experiences also. This research provides valuable previously unattained information that will be presented and disseminated to all who are wanting further knowledge on this particular topic. This research is a gift from the heart!

3.11.2 Mālie: The Impact on Recipients

Mālie is the expression of bravo when an audience can appreciate the performance (Fua, 2014). In research this is the evaluation process where the researcher will reflect on the research itself, whether was it worth the effort, and who will ultimately benefit from it. It is a constant process and requires consistent self-reflection to ensure it is aligning with the aims of the research. This phase relies on feedback and evaluating how well the research was received (McFall-McCaffery, & Cook, 2016). During the Toli phase, the feedback was positive and the participant's energy around sharing their experiences was contagious in an exciting way. If this is anything to go by, then in the mālie phase it is envisaged that the research will be well received. Having the opportunity to share the findings thus far informally with members of the community, has led to in-depth discussions where the atmosphere is filled with curiosity and a desire to learn more about the research. There is optimism that those in the academic world and the wider community will receive these doctoral research findings in the spirit

of how it is given. The recipient or people who have been kept in mind to receive the results of this research are the participants. It is their story, their results, their sacrifice, and their gift.

3.11.3 Māfana: Heartfelt

When you see a beautiful Tau'olunga (Tongan dance) being performed, it is easy to be moved by the energy and warmth being generated. This is amplified when the family place money on the performer and then join in her performance as they dance near her. We question if the feelings that were exhibited in the mālie phase are sustainable and enduring to the extent of being transformative (McFall-McCaffery, & Cook, 2016). Is this energy or warmth being generated long-lasting? This is the final and transformative phase of the research. It is when the researcher and the participant reflect and feel some form of accomplishment that they have made a difference and contribution to someone, or something through the research. It is when those who contributed to the research in any form or capacity feel empowered because of their contribution (Fua, 2014). As the research is disseminated, discussions will be generated regarding the content and the participants narratives. As discussions take place, the voice of the participant will be loud and clear empowering the participant through the research dissemination.

3.12 Summary

The methodology chapter described the research theoretical framework of Kakala, qualitative paradigm, constructivist epistemology, and relativism ontology. Methodologies of Talanoa and Tauhi vā, and the methods used to gather participants' experiences, and then analyse the data that was generated through rigorous thematic analysis.

The research has taken a significant approach by incorporating a research framework developed by a Tongan female academic, recognising the additional layer of Tongan ethics that must be demonstrated by the researcher towards the participants. As highlighted by Fua (2014), this entails being an ethical researcher who upholds moral values beyond the research context, fostering ethical relationships with all individuals involved in the research process, being accountable to the participants, and valuing their pivotal role in the knowledge-gathering process. By embracing these ethical considerations, the research is designed to ensure a respectful and responsible approach that aligns with Tongan cultural values.

Developing a relationship built on trust, respect, and open, honest communication was the foundation to build the research relationship. Once this was established through mutual respect, and developing rapport, the research experience was enhanced for both participant and researcher. According to Taufa (2014), respect for the participant is enhanced when the researcher is a Tongan female because, in some situations, it is only permissible for women to converse together on the sensitive subject matter. Despite not visibly fitting the Polynesian stereotype and not being fully fluent in Tongan, the

participants expressed a sense of comfort and familiarity with the researcher, perceiving her as one of them, a fellow Tongan woman. They felt at ease in sharing their thoughts openly. This may emphasise the significance of conducting research about Tongan women, led by a Tongan woman, with the aim of benefiting Tongan women and the broader community. This approach enable data gathering that was in-depth and rich, which may not have been gathered if a westernised approach had been utilised.

Chapter 4: Results

Papata pē, ka na'e lalanga

– It may be coarse in texture, but it was woven.

In the results section of this doctoral research, the findings are presented, utilising the information gathered through the methodology employed within the kakala framework. The aim within this framework was to determine the practicality, importance, and significance of the results, while also evaluating their rationality. This framework includes the mālie phase, which entails gathering knowledge and cultivating an open mindset for the cocreation of new insights generated from the participants and the researcher. Manu'atu (2017) defines mālie within a philosophical context as the harmonious integration of the heart and mind, facilitating openness to learning, knowledge acquisition, and the cultivation of wisdom through active thinking, imagination, and self-reflection. To acquire knowledge, data extraction was performed using thematic analysis.

The identification of themes in this study followed a systematic analysis process that aimed to identify subject matter that aligned with the research question. The researcher was extensively absorbed in the data, carefully reading and re-reading the transcripts to develop a thorough understanding of the participants' experiences and perspectives. This process required full immersion into the data, enabling the researcher to identify meaningful themes that directly related to the research question at hand.

The researcher utilised a coding system, assigning descriptive labels or codes to segments of data that encapsulated significant ideas, concepts, or patterns. This rigorous process involved a meticulous analysis of the data, examining it line upon line. The researcher actively sought connections and relationships between the initial codes, aiming to identify patterns or recurring themes across the entire dataset. By studying these connections in-depth, the researcher was able to extract rich insights from the participants and gain a comprehensive understanding of the data.

The main objective of the thematic analysis was to identify fundamental concepts that captured the essence of the participants' experiences. The researcher conducted a meticulous review and examination of the identified themes to ensure they encompassed the entire breadth of the participants' experiences. This involved analysing the connections between different codes and making necessary adjustments, such as merging or splitting themes when appropriate. It required considerable time and patience to ensure that the extracted themes authentically reflected the participants' voices, effectively conveying their experiences, perspectives, and challenges as Tongan women engaged in KRP.

Throughout the analysis process, these guiding questions directed the researcher, facilitating the identification of themes that aligned with the research aims and objectives.

The following are the five main themes were extracted from the data.

- The Role of Tongan Women in Kava Related Practices
- My Family and Kava Related Practices
- The Female Kava Consumer
- The Spouse of a Male Kava Consumer
- The Tou'a

Chapter 4.1 The Role of Tongan Women in Kava Related Practices

This doctoral research sought to gain an understanding of how a woman's role would be affected by evolving KRP, and how that impacted other aspects of her life. This section examines their role, the challenges they face, and issues within the dual roles of their family position and tou'a.

*'The importance of our ancient Tongan customs is that
they are the foundation of our way of life'.*

- HRH Angelika Lātūfuipeka Tuku'aho (Tuku'aho, 2022).

Introduction

There are many roles women play in KRP that are not limited to the role of tou'a, consumer, or spouse. There are mothers, daughters, sisters, and extended family that may have a role to play and are therefore impacted directly or indirectly by KRP. As we have identified in this research, some mothers are encouraging their sons to go faikava so they will not be tempted by drugs and alcohol. Some wives are resistant to husbands attending faikava which impacts on their daughter's opinion of kava drinking and not wanting to tou'a. Many tou'a have family who reap the financial benefits of them being a tou'a and pressure them to continue in that role even when they are married. Throughout all the roles that these participants play, there is the common theme of who they are as a Tongan woman, and how this impacts them on their involvement with KRP. The themes that were extracted from the talanoa regarding their roles are the following:

- The Role of a Tongan Woman
- When Roles Challenge Cultural Norms
- Dual Roles: Family and Tou'a

4.1.1 The Role of a Tongan Woman

To understand the participant's perspective on roles, it was necessary to ask them if they felt there were separate roles for men and women in Tongan society. Later in the research we will discuss the role of women within specific areas. In this section, it was sought to gain a general understanding of the role's women may have. They identify that there are distinct roles between men and women, as women they have roles to perform depending on their standing within their family. Participants shared that women are inclusive in their environment, and their role is one that is evolving and enhancing their identity.

“I’m with that role that men do this, and women do this”. – Langi (T)

Within the roles come various rankings and expectations of the woman who holds that role. This can be anything from being a daughter in a family and the expectations that come from that role, to being the fahu or mehikitanga (Sacred Aunt) who are the matriarchal heads in the family.

“And with the roles of women. We think we’re in a different rank, but they respect us in that way”. – Sina (S)

When it comes to KRP, Ane feels that it would be beneficial for fathers to take on the role of educating their daughters around KRP. She would like to see them teach their daughters the history, the practices, the protocols, and to share this aspect of their lives with them.

“You know like the daughter, you know the kids would come into the space where they wanted to learn more about what kava was and the father actually took on the role of teaching them about this story, this is how you drink it; this is what it tastes like, you know what I mean?” - Ane (C)

These thoughts from Ane recognise the importance of the daughter respecting and heeding advice from her parents. When a parent will take time to educate their daughter, it will enhance their relationship. Relationships are a key part of Tongan culture and therefore some participants feel that the role of the Tongan women in society and in KRP, is one that is welcoming others into her environment and valuing their presence. She creates an environment that fosters acceptance with no restrictions placed on gender. The participants would say this is anga faka Tonga - the Tongan way.

“When the women come together, they have no problems like if a guy wants to come and join their kava, yeah have a seat. If you want to. I’m not too sure why we’re less territorial.” – Lose (C)

This reference to the women being less territorial than the men highlights a role the participants embrace. That is the role that invites inclusivity and making connections with other women. In America there are many female kava groups that come together to embrace and enhance their musical talents, while connecting over their culture. They talk about their identity and the evolution of KRP. This includes the evolution of the role a woman plays in KRP in Aotearoa and abroad. Based on the research of Pescinski (2018), diaspora community members have a notable impact on shaping cities,

while their new country concurrently influences the development of their community and cultural identity. Despite encountering their own unique set of challenges, Pescinski (2018) emphasises that diasporic communities contribute significantly to the diversity and well-being of cities through their associations and cultural practices. According to the research conducted by Gunson (2022), migrants are utilising social media platforms to establish connections with individuals from their home countries and actively engage in communities that foster and reinforce these connections. With modern technology, women in Aotearoa can connect and join in with these groups online. Lose feels this is a good way in which KRP are evolving and provides an opportunity for women to explore their identity, ancestral roots, and roles.

“Women kava circles in America are getting together and they’re rapping. They’re using what is in their lives and consuming a drink that allows them to be curious about what is this and where. And then before you know it they’re talking about this little island and then they’re talking about all the islands, then they’re talking about their identity and so forth. Ah it’s great thing for kava to evolve amongst our lives.” – Lose (C)

Curiosity and gaining knowledge have been an integral part of the role these women have within KRP. As the participants acknowledge that men and women have different roles, part of their role is to connect with others in an inclusive way. As women strengthen connections with other women, explore their identity and how those impacts on their role as a Tongan woman, situations may arise where the evolving role may not align with the traditional role that is expected.

4.1.2 When Roles Challenge Cultural Norms

There are specific roles that Tongan women have, that some people believe should never change. One of those is the idea of women consuming kava. When a woman makes that choice, some members of the community will not support her decision. Many maintain that as a role it is only for men and if women are choosing to take on that role, then they would not support it or the woman’s choice. Rather than sit and enjoy kava with a female and support her in her choice of role she will play, some men will leave making it clear that he will not accept a female kava consumer.

“A woman who is drinking kava. He said he would actually stand up and leave.” – Ane (C)

Ane’s comment supports a belief system for some Tongan men and women, when a Tongan female is consuming kava, she is stepping out of her role. When she does this, some see that her femininity is in question. Because she chooses to consume kava which has been a male dominated tradition, she hears others refer to her as not being lady-like and been told she is just like a man because she makes a

choice to consume kava. 'Alisi's response to this is that it is no different to men going to work and coming home and having a beer. As a working woman, she too has the right to go to work and come home and have a drink of kava if she chooses. She feels no less of a woman because of her KRP.

"I've got some feedback from women saying to me "oh um you're like a man you just going in and drink there". No, I will never be like a man. I will always be a woman. ... It's part of our social right, we sit down and have a kava. Just like the palagi they sit down and have a drink of beer. So why don't we sit over a bowl of kava and talk?" – 'Alisi (C)

Lose highlights the pressures of other women implying that if a Tongan woman chooses to drink kava, she is not feminine. Lose states fervently that her choice to consume kava does not diminish her identity as a Tongan woman. She is no less feminine than any other Tongan woman who chooses not to consume kava. Kava consumption does not dictate femininity.

"It's very challenging when other women say you can't drink kava and they often come from the angle of a Christian value angle where no it's not feminine." – Lose (C)

The women feel that it is unnecessary that men would need to take ownership and therefore diminish the role a woman may choose. For the women, the role they play is not about who has ownership or the right to consume kava, it is about people coming together. It is a place of inclusivity not exclusivity. The issue is the lack of support for her in this role and enabling her the freedom to make that choice even if it does not align with some members of the Tongan communities' values and beliefs. Some participants believe a woman consuming kava loses her dignity.

"Ladies supposed to be at home, because kava in Tonga, is for the man and not ladies. But now things happen, change, you loss your dignity. Those ladies that go and drink kava, that's something wrong up here (pointing to her temple)." – Nisi (S)

When a woman no longer aligns herself with a portion of what society dictates is her role, then she is labelled as flawed in her thinking. This makes it difficult for some participants who are knowingly going against their family's perception of their role to be honest and open about their involvement with KRP. For example, when a young woman is raised in an environment where there is an expectation of her to honour the family rules and roles, if she steps out of this expectation placed on her, she may feel that she must keep her involvement in KRP secret. Especially if she feels that her family would not accept or support her involvement.

“I think one thing I forgot to mention, in terms of like men and women, God I’m gonna get roasted for this if my family actually finds out.” – Ane (C)

Ane’s role in her family is to be an obedient daughter and to adhere to her family values, which do not include women consuming kava. Ane’s role in her family is evolving as she develops and discovers her identity and how this will look in her family once, she is able to share with them her KRP. Will her decision to go against her family cultural norms raise concerns of her femininity, and mental health? For many families, having their daughter involved in KRP as a tou’a is more acceptable than her consuming kava. For the participants that tou’a, their role in their family may determine how, when, where, and who they will tou’a for.

4.1.3 Dual Roles: Family and Tou’a

The role that some young women have in their family, may include being a tou’a. There are the celebratory moments in a Tongan woman’s life where utilising KRP honour her and others through the role she performs. There were times when Seini felt the tou’a role that she was in, was a special moment and she relished in her moment where she felt different from those around her.

“I honestly see a female tou’a role as special. And it should remain special. They have ceremonies to celebrate that girl graduation and coming into a woman and an intelligent woman. She is that rose sitting amongst all these guys, that come in, and family members. There’s a role for it. There’s a place for it. It is a special thing.” – Seini (T)

The role that Seini saw herself in was a place where she felt her role in that tou’a place was special. With the service provided to the kava group, there is always the underpinning expectations of the role and duty that must be performed in the home. The time a tou’a may spend in her tou’a role may have negative impacts on her role in the family especially if she is working long hours in the tou’a role. Sela identified that when women fulfil their role as tou’a they must also be able to carry out their role within their family at home. This may become challenging for tou’a who’s kava group may demand that they stay there and tou’a until the early hours of the morning. When they find they need to sleep through the day to recover from being tou’a the night before, family and others may call them fakapikopiko (lazy) when they do not fulfil their role and responsibilities at home.

“I think it’s important to define the time that you finish, that you end the tou’a. Because if you go early mornings like if you have a tou’a and go till like 5 o’clock it’s like a double shift. Then as a tou’a you come home you actually don’t even have time to do anything in your house. You can’t even do the, your duty. And this is actually a negative part, because you still need to be able to go and, and serve but at the same time fulfil your own duty at home. But, when you go until 5 o’clock in the morning, then you come and you sleep the whole day, you’re told that you’re fakapikopiko, you’re lazy or something.” – Sela (T)

Sometimes, the expectations of the family may be the accentuating pressure that the young woman may find challenging in her dual role as a member of her family and the tou’a for her family. The family may inflict consequences when the young woman refuses to honour what her family perceive is the role that she plays in the family. When Seini was 15 years old, she left school. There was an expectation as a family that when you left school you would go to work and help provide financially for the family. Seini began working and would tou’a in her home most nights during the week and in the weekend. After a while it began to take a toll on Seini’s mental health, and she wanted to have some free time to herself. On one occasion she was fatigued and arrived home to men waiting for her to tou’a. When she was told to hurry up and perform her role, she answered back to her mother not thinking her mother would hear and consequently she received a beating. The pressure Seini’s family put on her was interlinked with the roles that her mother and grandfather had in their church and the commitments they had made for Seini to perform her role as a tou’a.

“I didn’t want to do it anymore. I was too exhausted, and I was like ‘oh nah they can wait a bit longer’. They’ve been sitting waiting patiently for the tou’a’, and I was like ‘oh nah they can wait a bit longer’. Being raised in the strict home life. You don’t talk back. Oh hell, I didn’t realise she heard that you know. And I got a hiding, I am in the bedroom getting whipped left right and centre, for talking back and disrespectful, and not doing what I am supposed to do. After that, she goes, ‘get yourself sorted’, she walked out. And I just sat there, crying. And it just felt like I was just being pressured to do it because of my parent’s status. My mum’s role in the church. My grandad’s role in the church. ...It was not about what I want though. It kind of eats away at you.” – Seini (T)

Seini’s experience highlights the interweaving of her role in the family, and her role as a tou’a. Her family factor in her role in both areas and when she baulks at fulfilling one of the roles then she is disciplined. If she is disobedient to her mother, then she is not fulfilling her role as a financial contributor in her family, she is not honouring her mother, and she is not satisfying either role. As Seini tried to make a decision that was not in line with her family values, she was quickly reminded of her obligations and duties as a daughter, and granddaughter.

The participants gave clear indications of how their dual roles sometimes worked harmoniously and at other times conflicted. Participants sought to find balance and at times pressure was placed on them through external forces such as men in the kava group wanting a tou'a to stay for longer, or from a family who demanded the participant fulfil both her roles as an obedient daughter, and as a tou'a for the family. An interesting observation was made by one of the participants regarding the tou'a role and where her place is designated in the kava circle. With many participants having dual roles, when comparing the female kava consumer and the tou'a, one participant noted the seating arrangements in the kava circle. The female kava consumer is part of the kava circle however, the tou'a is at the bottom of the circle. Lose identified that her role as a tou'a, was now seen as one of lesser value than those in the kava circle.

“I just wish women that were going in to tou'a would think it a little more carefully about what tou'a means to them as a Tongan woman. ...In a kava circle we're here and we're coming in to tou'a, well we've just gone from here which is lower than halfway down to here (indicating the bottom).” – Lose (C)

Despite what some may say about a woman's role in KRP, one thing that is clear is the participants feel strongly about their role and feel it does not detract from them being feminine or lady like in any way. They embrace their womanhood and honour it within their KRP. If men or women choose to label or put down these women because of the choices they make, then it will perpetuate the issues that arise from the role these women have, and the choices they make to continue in them. All participants honour their perceived role of what a Tongan woman's role may be defined as. They acknowledge that at times they have challenged or decided to go against what some may perceive as a cultural norm, and they stand by their choice.

Summary

The roles of Tongan women in KRP encompass a range of complexities and influences that extend beyond their individual involvement. These roles have a significant impact not only on the women themselves but also on their families and the broader community, both directly and indirectly. However, conflicts can arise when the needs and aspirations of the participants clash with the expectations and desires of their families.

In some instances, the participants may find themselves at odds with cultural norms or traditional expectations, leading to moments of conflict and tension. Despite these challenges, the participants stand firm in their decisions and assert their right to make choices that align with their own values and aspirations as Tongan women living in Aotearoa.

The experiences of these women highlight the complexities and nuances involved in navigating their roles within KRP. It underscores the importance of recognising and respecting the individual agency and autonomy of Tongan women, allowing them to shape their own paths and make choices that align with their personal beliefs and aspirations. By embracing and supporting their decisions, societies can foster a more inclusive and empowering environment that respects the diverse roles and experiences of Tongan women within the context of KRP.

4.1.5 Discussion

HRH Angelika Lātūfuipeka Tuku’aho asserts that the essence of a woman that encompasses her duties and role as a Tongan woman include the following:

- Maintain the home, take care of the children, clean, weave, make clothing, and instruct children. Do not spoil, pamper, or indulge the children.
- Give good advice to the children.
 - Emulate good behaviour, be honest, be trustworthy and seek good things.
 - Be obedient to parents.
 - Observe family taboos.
 - Learn family genealogy.
 - Honour the golden pillars of Tongan society:
 - Faka’apa’apa – Respect
 - Tauhi Vā – Maintain relations.
 - Mamahi’i me’a – Loyalty, passion
 - Lototō – Humility
 - Follow your role in your family (Tuku’aho, 2022).

The things that have been outlined by HRH Princess Angelika, are mentioned throughout this doctoral research. The participants refer to these duties and roles in various situations they experience and are forthcoming with examples during the talanoa. Identifying the distinctly separate roles that men and women have and honouring them whilst still having the autonomy to live their lives within their interpretation of their role is what makes each individual unique. For individuals their role will evolve as they gain new knowledge just like the role of Tongan women in general has evolved overtime. Tuku’aho (2022) raises concern over the erosion of traditional customs and values due to the advancement of technology and other factors. Some customs have changed, and for some participants, it may not have been to the benefit of women.

Ralston (1996: 110-112 as cited in Herda, Terrell, & Gunson, 1996) reports that there is little information regarding the role of Tongan women prior to the early records of foreign contact however, there is evidence that Tongan women enjoyed individual freedom. For those of higher

status, they had economic and political power. It was reported that Tongan women ate with the men, fought in wars, went on long voyages on vaka, and drank kava (Ralston, 1996: 110-112 as cited in Herda, Terrell, & Gunson, 1996). From this article it is suggested that women have been drinking kava for centuries. If this is the case, which some participants support, then it would be interesting to find out exactly when it became an issue for women drinking kava. It appears that pre missionary times in Tonga, the women experienced more personal freedom than post missionary interaction. It is possibly during the early connections with missionaries that the role of Tongan women began to evolve and become less aligned with that of the men.

Malm (2007) suggests that there came a time when distinct roles between men and women became more apparent. For Tongan men their role was consigned to work outside the home including working in the bush and in the ocean, and for Tongan women she was expected to do the household work, and other jobs that were closer to the home. That does not mean that Tongan women are expected to be limited in their capacity to fulfil their personal growth and development. The participants in this research are well educated, continuing to further their education, and have careers in areas they have chosen. This has been a great asset to some of these women as they have used KRP as a vehicle to promote positive change through education to the men in the kava groups they tou'a for. Tonga has the highest PhDs per capita in the world (Tamahere, 2014). This suggests that education is an important part of the role on Tongan women.

'In Tonga, Women Cloak Their Power Under Mother Hubbard Dresses,' was a heading in the Los Angeles Times newspaper (Spano, 2000). The article conveys that some western cultures may see that a Tongan woman not been able to own land as inequality however, the article highlights that she therefore does not have to work the land and can dedicate her time to taking care of the home and seeking entrepreneurial prospects. During this research the participants were proud of who they are and their Tongan heritage. *Koe 'api 'a fafine* (home is for women) was not a saying that was deemed as an insult or hindrance, it was an honour for the women who had family. The participants who were mothers talked often about the importance of their role as a mother and to be mindful and take care of their children and family's needs. Subsequently, it would be a fair comment to say that the role of a Tongan woman is whatever she interprets and conveys it to be. It is forged through her experiences, relationships, socialisations, church, education, and constructed knowledge that she has gained through her life. Therefore, it would be inappropriate for anyone to condemn a Tongan woman for her choices that she makes in KRP and how she performs the role she chooses.

Chapter 4.2 My Family and Kava Related Practices

With the understanding of the importance of family in Tongan culture, it was vital that this doctoral research explore the relationship between family and KRP. This section examined what family philosophy influenced their decision to be involved in KRP, with the purpose of identifying family perceptions and expectations of the participants and their KRP.

‘There is a clear link between fecundity and mana. This means that without children the family lineage dies, as do all the ancestors who live in the supernatural world because there is no one left to honour them. Thus, women establish the continuity between the past and the present.’

- (Hermkens, & Lepani, 2017, p. 196)

Introduction

As a collectivist society, the foundation of Tongan culture is family. According to HRH Princess Angelika, it is important for parents to teach their children their role and duty in the family and the children are to respond with obedience to their parents out of love and not fear (Tuku’aho, 2022). It is suggested by some of the participants that when they are not in their own home with their family but living with extended family, then they are to be respectful of the family they are staying with and follow their guidance. The family whether immediate or extended have had influence over the participants. This chapter will identify the effect family have on the decision-making process with KRP. As the participants have freely shared their thoughts on their families, the following themes have been extracted:

- Family Tradition
- Family Connection and Disconnection
- Family Obligation
- Managing the Intricacies of Family and Kava Related Practices

4.2.1 Family Tradition

Family traditions are what a family unit dictates as important to them to uphold and pass on through generations. It can be a systemic belief that unites families together. Family traditions or culture can be a space where a young person may learn roles in KRP. This may extend to roles in the community and provide occasions for families to spend time together.

‘Alisi grew up in a family where her father was one of the founding members in Tonga of the kalapu fofu’anga, the kalapu mohetaha. Her father would go and source tou’a from his workplace and they would attend the kalapu to raise funds for their community and church. ‘Alisi grew up with an

understanding of the roles and rules surrounding the KRP. When ‘Alisi made the decision to consume kava, she understood that there were certain rules that she would uphold because they had been imbedded in her through her family. One belief is that women should not drink kava with the men at a kalapu. A main contributing factor for ‘Alisi is the need for women and men having separate toilet facilities.

“And we never go to a kalapu because of values like I said. There’s no toilet for us to go. When we have it at home, we go to the toilet, the men go outside. So that’s when I said, when we drink kava, we still have to uphold our, the women’s values, they still have to respect us.” – ‘Alisi (C)

‘Alisi’s knowledge around KRP was due to her father’s influence and therefore when it came to her making her own choice around KRP, there were certain rules that needed to be adhered to otherwise she would not condone it. As an adult ‘Alisi is a kava consumer, but as a young woman, her first experience with KRP was as a tou’a. ‘Alisi felt the honour and pride of her family when she was chosen with other young women in her community to tou’a at a taumafa kava. All the families and clans of the nobles were brought together to witness the ceremony. This was an honour and privilege for her to serve on behalf of not only her immediate family but all her clan.

“I did practice in the kava serving of a taumafa at one time when they were appointing the name Lavaka this present King when he was entitled. The name Lavaka is a noble title, at the time he was still a prince so because of our related to the you know how the clans, the noble they’ve got their clans here. They selected a few young girls, so I was told from my family to go and serve the kava. So, I serve the kava at the taumafa kava.” – Alisi (C)

For many participants their family were the reason they first became involved in KRP. Lose grew up in a family where it was normal for women to consume kava. The women in her family would consume kava while they would make tapa, have a meeting, or meet for a social gathering. Kava was a part of their family culture and one which she now passes on to her children. Lose notes that this is where women may differ from the men in their approach to KRP because of the way they include their family. Men will go and meet with other men and consume kava whereas the women will take their children with them and see it more as a time to spend together as a family.

“You know men go away from home and drink kava. Women will have kava at home or a family member home and go with their kids. Like a family outing or a close friend outing and its more than likely if they’re gonna go all night they take the kids.” – Lose (C)

Some participants enjoy the time that their spouse is away from home especially when their relationship is strong. Supporting traditions and creating new ones can strengthen family relationships. However, the men going away from the home and not spending time with the children had an impact on Ane.

4.2.2 Family Connection and Disconnection

Connections within the family were an important factor in the participant's lives. Ane and 'Alisi sought to strengthen their connection with their fathers through consuming kava. Because of this, there became a rupture in the family relationships whether through keeping consumption a secret from family or being open about it and been labelled silly. To gain that connection Ane and 'Alisi rebelled against their family traditions.

Ane loves her family. However, she felt some disconnection from her family because she believed that if she could participate in KRP then she would be close to her deceased father. Her father passed away when she was younger, and kava was an important part of his life. From her perspective, she conveyed that if a father is going out to participate in KRP and he will not allow his daughter to accompany him, then she felt that it would be hard to develop the father/daughter relationship if he is absent every night.

"...to even bond especially with family like if they have a father who goes out to faikava every night, and then there's not that father daughter relationship that there should be." – Ane (C)

In a bid to find some connection with her deceased father, Ane turned to KRP and became involved as a kava consumer. However, due to her family's disapproval of women consuming kava, Ane has had to keep it a secret from them. Ane grew up in a family where kava was not consumed by women. This intergenerational family value was entrenched in her understanding of KRP and the main reason that she was initially resistant to be involved in KRP.

"I feel like my family like my uncles and my Mum especially they sort of fed into that adrenaline that I had within me. As in like, why can't I go there?" – Ane (C)

However, Ane considers herself to be a little rebellious and going against her family was inevitable. Although she was the only participant that felt the need to keep her KRP secret, she is not the only one who feels that they have been rebellious and going against their family values by participating in KRP. 'Alisi too connected with her father through KRP. Her family did not approve of her kava consumption, and they thought of her as being silly.

“I grew up to be a rebellion daughter, and they always know that. Stop being silly. You are drinking kava” – ‘Alisi (C)

The disconnection that ensued with their families was not due to a desire to disconnect, but the opposite. Through seeking a connection with a loved one, they made the choice to disconnect from an important aspect of their family culture. It can be difficult when there are family obligations to fulfil that do not align with individual values. Both Ane and ‘Alisi loves their families and wanted to connect with their deceased fathers through KRP. Being part of a kava group enabled them to feel what it was like for their fathers being in that setting.

4.2.3 Family Obligations

Participants stated that it is important for a young person to oblige any requests made by her family. This is to prove herself to be an obedient and faithful daughter. Sometimes this may go against the personal desires of the participant. Nevertheless, they will honour the role that they have within that family system. They may experience the feeling that they have no control over their decisions, and they may feel apprehensive and concern for the disapproval they know they will face from other family members.

Sela did not want to be a tou’a. She valued her family and when her uncle made the request for her to tou’a, she did not want to disrespect him. Overall, she found it a humbling experience. Sela shared that when you are asked to serve kava, it can define who are within your family.

“It was a family kava where people come, knock on the door, and as a young Tongan girl that like is humbling for you to serve that. But in those days, I didn’t really want to do it, but I was obligated to do it because I can’t put down my uncle by saying no. ...it is actually defined who you are within the family.” - Sela (T)

Factoring where your position is in the family can impact others because of your decision. Langi was raised in a family where the girls did not tou’a and it was frowned upon if they did. However, her extended family who lived overseas had kava groups meet in their home. It was a whole new world for Langi and one that she was reluctant to be a part of. Her extended family were relentless in wanting her to tou’a. They resorted to her kind nature by saying it would benefit another person because of her contribution as tou’a. Eventually Langi relented to her aunt’s demands and agreed to tou’a.

“I said NO for quite a while. But then I agreed to it because my aunty just every night kept saying Ohhh please please do this for you, for her.” – Langi (T)

Langi knew it was important for her aunty to have her tou’a because she was someone new. Despite all the resistance from Langi, there was a lot of pressure put on Langi to the point that she felt like she had to do this for her family. Having grown up in a religious family she was aware that her family in Aotearoa may not be happy with her decision. One of the men present compounded her discomfort when he referred to her father and what he would be thinking about her decision.

“When I sat in that kava party that night one of the men there knew my parents and said to me: ‘I’m so surprised that you’re tou’a here because your family are not tou’a. What would your dad think of you?’ And that just broke my heart. You know it broke my heart and I went a bit quieter for the evening.” – Langi (T)

When Langi returned home to Aotearoa, her siblings mocked her and made sure she knew that none of her four sisters would ever tou’a. Nevertheless, because Langi had always been an honourable daughter and member of her family, her father understood and supported her decision because he trusted her.

“I am the first and only one out of five girls that has tou’a because they never would. They accept I made a decision, and they don’t hold it against me. But it was just at that time that the expectations of other people that made me feel the way that night. Because my dad’s expectation was ‘terms of trust’. I trust my daughter and that was fine with me.” – Langi (T)

Pressure from family to uphold obligations can be emotionally taxing on the participant. Seini was supportive of her family and understood her role as a financial contributor to the family through being a tou’a. Seini believed that if she was able to do it on her own terms then she would be a more willing and pro-active tou’a. However, with there being constant pressure from her family, it began to take a toll on Seini, and she lost the desire to want to tou’a.

“If I did it when I wanted to do it, yeah, which would be less. Then I would not be feeling or thinking in that way. But because it wasn’t on my terms, it was on my family’s terms, that it became a forceful pressure thing you know. And we all know we’re not good when we pressured and forced to do things.” – Seini (T)

Losing the desire to tou'a took a toll on Seini but she wanted to be an obedient daughter. Even when some participants succumbed to family pressure there was a risk that other family members would not be supportive especially when it was pertaining to the role of a tou'a.

4.2.4 Managing the Intricacies of Family and Kava Related Practices

When you are involved in KRP it can be family oriented and the ancestral connections between all those who are attending are important. Knowing your lineage and the expectations of your family will provide some protection for the tou'a and kava group members. When family input is rejected and systems not in place to protect the tou'a, then it may be sought from the wider community. Family support through difficult times is essential for the participants who have experienced trauma through their involvement with KRP. Nevertheless, at times it has been the participant to turn away from the family support due to shame, or to protect the family from worrying about her. For one participant it was the love of her family that enabled her to endure a life-changing situation and continue to provide for her family.

Genealogy and knowing your heritage are essential when being involved in KRP as a tou'a. This is to ensure you don't have a faka'apa'apa with anyone there. Initial conversations are about making family connections no matter where you have come from or currently reside. When the connections are identified, then the respect for one another increases.

“Although you're related but then you don't have a faka'apa'apa guy who are there you know, your cousin could be there. But they all connected because the people who are there, they know my family, they know my father, they know my uncle, they know the deceased family. And they respect you on a different level.” – Sela (T)

This respect is reflected through how a family supports the tou'a. Sela shared that it was not common for a tou'a to have an affair with a member of the kava group. She believed this may be because as a family, you define what your expectations are for the tou'a and the role that she will play. When the expectations are clear, it enables the tou'a to fulfil her obligations with the kava group and with her family. There is no space for the men in the kava group to request that the tou'a stay longer than specified and return home early in the morning.

“That was something new. It wasn’t when that we grew up with. But then I heard them having an affair with somebody so, that’s where the negative correlation come around where they label people with tou’a. And I think as a family, it’s important to define the time that you finish, that you end the tou’a. Because if you go early mornings like if you have a tou’a and go till like 5 o’clock it’s like a double shift. Then as a tou’a you come home you actually can’t, you don’t even have time to do anything in your house. You can’t even do the, your duty.” – Sela (T)

When infidelity happens around KRP, some family try to support and salvage the couple’s ruptured relationship. But family input is not always welcomed especially when the person who has committed adultery does not want anyone to know of their infidelity. The Tongan community is small, and many people are connected. When support is sought from extended family in the Tongan community, it may come in ways that are unexpected.

“It was shocking when I said to her, he is going with the tou’a. And the woman, told the husband and the husband went to the kava, and he told them the story. And then he rang and talk to me why, why you tell them. We family. And then, one day the minister he came with the girl. Because the girl is his niece. We had a prayer and they left” – Vina (S)

For Vina it was nice to have the support of family, but she did not feel comfortable to open up to the family of the alleged adulteress. When adultery occurs in KRP, there are many family members impacted. When Siu had an affair, she did not know he was a married man until she had already developed strong feelings for the man. As their relationship continued, his family were left with the devastation of trying to heal from the infidelity.

“That image of me as a tou’a, he fall in love with it. And I fall in love with the same thing with him. I didn’t even know he was married. When I was pregnant already like I was two months pregnant. Then I found out he was already married. So, it ended up family going broke, and you know, with broken hearts and all that.” – Siu (T)

There are no winners in a family when there is infidelity involved. The greatest losers are the children. For Siu providing for her children and family is the main motivator for her being a tou’a. Without the income, she would not be able to pay the bills here and for her family in Tonga. When she was faced with what she believed was a life-threatening situation because of KRP, her thoughts were with her family and her need to get through this for them. Her desire to make sure they were taken care of financially was the reason that despite all that has happened to her, she still returns there every week to tou’a.

“When you don’t do what the rapist tell you what to do you ended up being killed or you know. And at that time, all that was on my mind was my kids and my family. They were relying on me, because the money that I get from tou’a not only pay my bills in here but also help my family back in Tonga.”
– Siu (T)

Family obligations, commitment, and loyalty may look different to each participant but there is no doubt that they have a lot of love and loyalty for their family. This is why they do what they do. Ane may keep her KRP a secret from her family nevertheless, she acknowledges that her family know her well and probably suspect that she is doing it anyway. For many of the participant’s family, whether they introduced, pressured, or encouraged the participant to be involved in KRP, their family is paramount in their decision-making processes including around KRP.

4.2.5 Summary

Family is the foundation of Tongan culture. Loyalty and obedience to one’s family is passed down through each generation. This is an expectation that whether one lives with their immediate or extended family, their obligations will be the same. When chosen to be a tou’a especially in an important ceremony, there is a lot of pride felt by the family. The experience they share together can strengthen the family relations with immediate and extended family. These relationships and connections are sought among the dead as well as the living.

KRP for some participants has been a necessary source of healing and connecting to a deceased loved one. Despite their decision to go against the living family members, their choice to connect with tupu’anga (ancestor) has been worth it for some. This connection with tupu’anga (ancestor) is important to know for two reasons. One, so that you can connect with others when you meet them for the first time and seek familial relations. Two, once that is established you will know if you faka’apa’apa with anyone in the group and they will have to leave. Having connections may provide the tou’a with that someone to look out for her within the kava group. The commitment and loyalty to family are all part of the decision-making process for these participants.

4.2.6 Discussion

Participants shared how some of their tupu’anga were involved in KRP including fofo’anga kava clubs in Tonga and Aotearoa. KRP has proven to be a way to connect with the past and with previously unknown familial connections. The desire to connect has been a motivating factor for some of the participants as they yearn to connect with their fathers. By choosing KRP as a means of connection, it has brought some disconnection with other family members. In Ane’s case, the determination to keep her KRP a secret from her close-knit family will put a strain on their relationship as her behaviour will become one of secrecy when connecting with KRP.

Keeping secrets and strained relationships undermines the pillars of Tongan society upon which many Tongan families adhere to. This is partly why Ane struggles with the secrecy around her kava consumption. When discussing tauhi vaha'a/vā the maintenance of the relationship includes the family. Faka'apa'apa in the family pertains to respecting all members. Anga fakatokilalo/loto tō entails being humble and open to learning. Mamahi'i me'a is the loyalty and passion applied to oneself. Ane will at some point become open to her family about her kava consumption and why she pursues it. If the setting in which she shares this information fosters an environment based on Faa'i Kavei Koula 'a e Tonga: Tonga's pillars, then it will provide for a discussion where all involved are respectful, open to learning, and willing to respect one another's viewpoints. This can be challenging when opposing perspectives are felt passionately by each family member.

It can be a balancing act for the participants to uphold their family obligations whilst attending to their own needs. At times their own needs took a backseat to the needs of the family which had a negative impact on the participant if they did not have their family support. Family support was hard for some participants to manage as they did not want family involved in situations they were struggling with. However, it was because of family that some participants push through any challenges they may have because the value they have for their family takes precedence over the emotional turmoil they may be facing. In Siu's case, she could not take the time away from KRP to heal or recover from her trauma because she knew she must keep going to provide for her young family. Her family could provide support emotionally, but they could not help her financially which left her with little option but to keep going.

The participants take pride in the role they play in their family. Their involvement with KRP had many varying impacts on their family including representing their family as a tou'a on prestigious occasions, connecting with family, serving their family, and generating income. Although it was not always positive, and some felt the need to not disclose their association with KRP, as relationships at home may experience some challenges, the benefits of the being involved in KRP offset the disapproval of others. Some participants believe KRP should bring people together, not separate them.

Chapter 4.3 The Female Kava Consumer

With little research available on women who consume kava, this doctoral research examined why women chose to consume kava and what some of the influences were that contributed to her decision. The aim of this section is to highlight the voice of the female kava consumer including the successes and challenges that she has faced. Many challenges have been brought about by one's understanding of what traditional practice around women consuming kava is.

“Central purpose of kava is bringing people together.” – Lose (C)

Introduction

The participants had strong views when it came to discussing women consuming kava. When meeting with participants who were kava consumers, they expressed diverse opinions as to why they decided to be a kava consumer. These ranged from being a pioneer for women and breaking with what they believed to be a cultural norm that kava was only for the men; another believed it was her right, and her heritage; another wanted to go beyond the boundaries that had been set for her from her family around KRP. Nevertheless, one thing they all agreed on is that it should be a choice that women have and not be seen as a ‘men only’ commodity. Those participants who were adamant that women should not consume kava were just as strong in their understanding and belief as to why kava consumption should be left to the men. This section delivers the findings of the female kava consumers and includes perceptions and viewpoints from the other participants. The main themes are as follows:

- Kava Practices
- Women Consuming Kava
- Women Don't Drink Kava
- Women Who Consume Kava are Going Against Tradition
- It is Not a Sin for Women to Consume Kava
- Kava Evolution
- The Benefits of Kava Consumption
- Kava: A Safe Alternative
- If it's Good for the Men, then it's Good for the Women
- Tou'a Consuming Kava

4.3.1 Kava Practices

The kava ceremony is the centre of Tongan culture and is taught as part of the school curriculum in Tonga. As the children are taught the legend of Kava'onau at an early age, they grow up with an understanding of the importance and sacredness of kava and its' related practices. Participants could recall ideology behind KRP including sacrifice, faka'apa'apa (respect), mamahi'i me'a (loyalty), honour, tauhi vā (relationships) and 'ofa (love). The participants acknowledge their connection through the fonua (land) and, for the people of 'Eueiki, their genealogical bloodlines that connect them directly to kava.

'Alisi and the other participants who did their primary schooling in Tonga were taught as part of the school curriculum, the legend of Kava'onau and the importance of kava as part of the Tongan culture.

"I first know about kava learning at school how kava is originally from and how it comes to us and be part of our custom and culture." – 'Alisi (C)

Lose's connection to KRP goes beyond what was taught in the classroom. For Lose, her kava lineage runs through her veins. Her ancestral connection to 'Eueiki is a direct link to the fonua and the home of the legend of Kava'onau.

"Kava, is you know fonua, is land, everyone is connected to land and most people will be, will have that understanding. But then there's the people that are part of the legend of kava. Ah they say they say yes that is fonua but also their blood." – Lose (C)

Although Ane was not taught about kava at school, she gained an understanding of kava through her family and her father's connection to kava. His involvement in being part of kava groups developed her perspective of kava.

"The kava ceremony is the centre of like Tongan thought and a Tongan way of being, and thinking, and perception." – Ane (C)

The foundational knowledge the participants have gained around KRP has been primarily through school and family. These influences have helped shape the participant's initial understanding of KRP. Overtime, for some of them their understanding and perception of KRP have evolved dramatically.

4.3.2 Women Consuming Kava

Women consuming kava is a controversial topic amongst the participants in this research. The kava consuming participants felt it was their right and their choice to consume kava if they wanted to regardless of being a woman. For these participants, the benefits outweighed the negatives despite being termed as rebellious or unfeminine. Being in a space that immersed one into learning more about their own culture was something previously recognised as what men appreciate when they faikava. With this now becoming an opportunity for women, they also reap the benefits of being with other women who know their cultural connection, their divine lineage to kava and the details that encompass KRP. The connection they have, or are generating, is robust enough to withstand the negative comments that have been made regarding their femininity and familial stance that kava is a man's thing.

'Alisi was ridiculed by family and members of the community who labelled her as rebellious for making a choice to consume kava. 'Alisi is proud of the fact that she is empowered as a woman and will do what she wants regardless of the expectations and perceptions of others.

"I grew up to be a rebellion daughter, and they always know that. Even though they say this, I will do whatever I wanna do." – 'Alisi (C)

For participant Ane, after much resistance due to her preconceived notions on KRP, Ane was enticed into a space other colleagues believed would be one that she would thrive in and connect more with her culture. A space that she would share with non-Tongans who understood KRP in depth. Ane was taken aback by the way she felt and what she learned in that environment.

"It was actually quite like invigorating for me. Even though I am full Tongan, like I still felt like there are Tongan things that I didn't understand. And then like being in that space with these other contemporaries they helped me to understand it." – Ane (C)

Lose was brought up around kava and believes strongly that women have divine rights to consume kava. Lose feels it is contradictory to the nature of kava when someone tries to dictate who can and cannot partake of it. The essence of kava is 'ofa which signifies inclusivity as opposed to exclusivity.

” There should be no reason, not for women to drink I mean kava itself is a woman. You know the fonua itself is feminine, the land is feminine. So, to take ownership and control something of ours, is not right. It’s not what kava is about and like I said, central to kava is love. And love is not about ownership or taking control of kava. It’s being together rather than controlling.” – Lose (C)

As more women are choosing to consume kava, the kava consuming participants had various experiences with their connection to kava. One participant had grown up in Tonga with a family culture that supported women drinking kava. This behaviour was modelled to her by the women in her family in particular her aunts and grandmother. This fostered an environment of women consuming kava as an appropriate cultural practice for this family.

“My aunts and my grandma drank it in socially not always ceremony probably more socially when they’re having a meeting.” – Lose (C)

Alisi who had also been born in Tonga shared a different family culture where women drinking kava was not condoned by all family members. Her mother was conservative and believed that women were not ladylike if they consumed kava. Therefore, this participant would sneak out until her mother passed away and then she became open about her kava consumption. 0

“It’s because you been brought up in a way that you don’t do that. That is only for men, and you do this, this is more ladylike no way. So, I started it when my mum passed away. I but I sneak out when she was still alive.” – Alisi (C)

The cultural connection for Ane was augmented by the environment and the purpose for the consumption of the kava. Being in a kava group with like-minded contemporaries facilitated a connection through kava.

“Being in a space where I was surrounded by like-minded people. It didn’t matter what we studied but what we did connect on was culture. And that culture was in the kava.” – Ane (C)

For participants like Lose who are descendants of ‘Eueiki, the physical embodiment of the kava is likened to taking something from the fonua into your body which connects you to your tupu’anga (ancestors).

“It's literally something from um the dirt, from the fonua and taking it into your body and it's like the cycle of reciprocity just keep renewing your connection to your tupu'anga. To your roots and where you come from.” – Lose (C)

Opportunities are becoming more available for women to consume kava across a wide range of settings. Having a space where one can go and connect with their culture, their tupu'anga, and others was an incentive to be a part of KRP. There is opposition in all things and in KRP this is no different. Participants have faced being called unladylike, unfeminine, and rebellious. Nevertheless, the sense of belonging and understanding is inspiring for these participants. They are strong in their convictions that they have the right to choose to drink kava if they want which faces some criticism from the community.

4.3.3 Women Don't Drink Kava

Some participants believed to be a right of women to consume kava. However, not all participant or members of the Tongan community feel the same. It was a difficult decision for some of the participants when it came to being open and honest about their kava consumption. There were stereotypes and negative undertones within the Tongan community regarding women who consumed kava. Participants agreed that women consuming kava was frowned upon, and they were going against traditions. Arcia Tecun, Reeves, and Wolfgramm (2020) highlight the persisting stigmatisation surrounding women's consumption of kava. However, this status quo is being challenged as women and individuals of other genders reclaim their rightful place in Tongan KRP. If a woman speaks up against this ideology, she will be challenged or shut down for her beliefs. This made it clear for some participants that they needed to keep their kava consumption secret rather than face disappointment or disapproval from family members. For Ane, she must keep her kava consumption private especially from her family. When she first experimented with KRP, she knew that she had crossed a line but found a place where she was accepted regardless.

“Even just before I stepped into this space, all of these negative connotations, that were associated with faikava, I already knew that as soon as I crossed that line. ... and that's one of the reasons that I quite like hanging around with the friends that I have, because they saw past those negative connotations. – Ane (C)

It is challenging for women to speak up about their experience and rights. When they state that they can drink kava and it is culturally appropriate, other people are quick to dispute this. Lose has frequently heard that kava is a man's thing.

“I’ve noticed that when a Tongan woman speaks out and says ah “actually I can drink kava”. They tend to be shut down quite quickly or challenged quite quickly and say what makes you think as a Tongan woman traditionally or culturally you’re not supposed to, that’s a man thing you know.” – Lose (C)

For the participants who consume kava, they have all experienced people disputing their right to consume. Some participants stated that it caused them trepidation about engaging with KRP. Nonetheless, these participants have made their choices and are content with it.

4.3.4 Women Who Consume Kava are going Against Tradition

This belief system of women consuming kava being non-traditional was echoed amongst most of the other participants. Several participants respected that there are women who want to consume kava nevertheless, of the non-kava consumers, five out of seven believed that kava is for the men only. If women consume kava, they are going against the Tongan traditional KRP. Not only are they going against tradition, but it can be perceived as going against Christian beliefs. It is a sin.

Langi, Seini, and Nisi all firmly believed that kava is not for women to consume, and they are going against tradition. Nisi further states that the women should be at home taking care of their duties in the home.

“I respect that they want to consume it but for me personally, I think that kava drinking should be left for the men.” Langi (T)

“it was not something that we practice as Tongans for women to drink kava.” – Seini (T)

“Ladies supposed to be at home, It’s only the man. Because kava in Tonga, is for the man and not ladies.” – Nisi (S)

Some participants were raised with a belief that for women to consume kava is a sin. For a culture that has strong Christian values that are embedded within the foundational belief systems of society, there is a challenge that you cannot drink kava and uphold the values of Christianity at the same time. You will be contradicting God’s laws.

“Don’t do it because it’s bad. It’s a sin. Whereas like, I’m like ok, but can you still go to heaven? – Ane (C)

“Many of us haven’t understood what Christianity is really about and how we can live as Christians and how we can live culturally together.” – Lose (C)

One participant was reprimanded by a faifekau (church minister) for not going to church and for choosing to consume kava instead. The faifekau's wife was concerned that if 'Alisi died no one would go to her funeral. Nevertheless, 'Alisi found it hard to reconcile what was being said to her and her belief of being a good person in the eyes of God. 'Alisi did not believe that consuming kava was a sin for her and did not appreciate being reprimanded in the street by someone she felt was not abiding by the values of Christianity. 'Alisi clearly stated to all those who were there, what she would do. This took inner strength for 'Alisi to make a stand for what she believed was her right to choose her own path in life.

“Definitely I will not come. I am going to drink kava and I'm going home.” And from that day on nobody would ever approach me from then.” – 'Alisi (C)

Whether it is against tradition or God, there is no doubt that there are strong opinions held in the community regarding women consuming kava.

4.3.5 It is Not a Sin for Women to Consume Kava

The participants who consume kava are adamant despite what some may think, they are not sinners. As Tongan women, all participants identified as having a spiritual belief system that they adhere to. This was important to them to uphold, and they defend their right to consume kava as women, and as Christians. For the seasoned kava consumer, it is no longer an issue, yet for the consumers who are not long on the kava consuming journey, it is a matter of making an informed decision based on what they understand will become their truth. It is a matter of balancing the information.

“We are just slowly realising that actually there's no harm in drinking kava, there's no sin in drinking kava that affects our femininity, that affects us as Mums, as such. – Lose (C)

As Ane gathers all the information, she is seeking clarity and is making an informed decision based on the information she obtains.

” What I'm doing at the moment is taking in all the information that is being told to me, as in like don't do it because it's bad. It's a sin. So, there is that sort of seesaw that I'm always trying to find balance. – Ane (C)

It is easier for some more than others to stand firm in their convictions and the right to consume kava. When one is raised in a spiritual belief system that consuming kava for women is a sin, then it may be

thought provoking. In Ane's case, she made a decision to go against her family values. Lose is an advocate for the positive effects that kava has on women, their femininity, and their role as mothers.

4.3.6 Kava Evolution

Despite the concerns raised by members of the Tongan community, some participants identified that the belief systems that surround KRP need to evolve in many areas including the consumption of kava by more women. This may require people being open to learn, and willing to accept this evolution especially as KRP are an important part of the Tongan culture. As it evolves it may cross boundaries that are considered tapu (sacred) such as faka'apa'apa between cousins who consume kava together. It is necessary to consider that despite what is perceived as the breaking of tradition, values are still upheld, and as KRP evolve, the greater good can be achieved through cultural understanding and acceptance.

Evolving KRP are extending into many areas including university settings where traditional roles and rules are less adhered to and there are no restrictions on who may attend and consume the kava.

"I think it I think it's a good thing you know if you really want people to learn more about something and in this case about kava, then you have to be willing to let kava evolve." – Lose (C)

Most of the kava consuming participants who continue in their KRP, adhere to traditions and values in their own way. Some participants acknowledge that they do not uphold the faka'apa'apa custom nevertheless, this is not because they do not appreciate the traditions of KRP and faka'apa'apa ideology, it is more to do with allowing KRP to evolve and be performed across a multitude of settings with a broader range of kava group participants.

"In the kava club, I have a second cousin who I'm faka'apa'apa with" – Ane (C)

With KRP evolving, the rules around it are changing. Nevertheless, as 'Alisi states, there are still values that participants adhere to especially if they are the one organising the kava group.

"Like see when I drink kava there's no set of rules there but I have values when I drink kava. I'm still a woman, and you have to respect me like a woman." – 'Alisi (C)

The KRP evolution is going where no kava groups have gone before. Lose shared her experience of the first kava group she knew of, where men and women came together for a specific purpose. The significance of this event, and the demonstration of KRP evolving was displayed to members of the

wider community. This signified the importance of embracing events such as this and the bringing together of all people regardless of gender, for the greater good. The two groups functioned independently of each other but were connected through their cultural understanding, and the purpose of the event.

“Women and men kava circles came together and had kava at the same time under the same roof for the first time. You know and that was unheard of. The circles were still separate circles. They had a men’s circle on the floor and then they had the women’s circle up on the table. ...The kava circles were operating together, but they were served differently. That was a very special time and I think that it’s a good example of kava bringing people together and evolving, using it for the greater good.”
– Lose (C)

As kava continues to evolve and the wider community are open to learn, KRP will evolve to include values that may look slightly different from the traditional way. As this develops, KRP will embrace the fact that women are consuming kava, and it can be utilised for the greater good.

4.3.7 The Benefits of Kava Consumption

For many women kava consumers, they feel the benefits of their KRP outweigh the negativity that may surround their choices. When it came to how often the women would consume kava, consumer participants stated that it was at least four times per week depending on what was happening in their lives. When they were experiencing stressful times, the frequency and amount may increase. When they feel there is no one to socialise with, it may decrease. A few of the main benefits the participants experienced from consuming kava, was it made them feel relaxed, increased sociality, and a decrease in feelings of anxiety.

“Personally, for me, when I get stressed a lot, I usually drink it like 4-5 times a week.” – Ane (C)

“But every week I would consume kava. Normally I’d consume Tuesday nights, after Wednesday nights, most Fridays and then Saturdays. Sometimes Sundays but ah around about four or five times a week.” – Lose (C)

When ‘Alisi had the opportunity to be with friends and family to consume kava, she would do it as often as possible. However, ‘Alisi has certain protocols that she likes to follow including being in a home environment. Therefore, her consumption was dependent on who was available when she was available.

“Hardly. ...Just because there’s no one drinking kava.” – Alisi (C)

When the participants were consuming kava, they recorded common effects. These included a sense of being ‘drunk’, feeling relaxed and less anxious, and a feeling of confidence. The effect of kava consumption provided one participant with enough confidence that when the opportunity arose for her to speak openly with people unfamiliar to her, she was able to embrace the moment and feel comfortable.

“Soon as I drink the kava, it opens up, like I feel a lot more relaxed. My mind is on the clouds, you know like um and I’m actually willing to be more open and comfortable in talking with strangers. – Ane (C)

“If I’m feeling a little bit down, or somethings going on in my life and I’ll drink kava. I, I will feel a little bit more relaxed, less anxious about it but still think about it.” – Lose (C)

The kava consuming participants state their consumption is several times a week unless there is no one available or the participant does not want to consume kava alone. As they stated, the kava gives them a feeling of relaxation, decreases anxiety, and helps them to connect with others socially. For the university students, kava helps them to focus and stay relaxed during the stressful exam periods. For some it was a preferred alternative to other substances.

4.3.8 Kava: A Safe Alternative

These benefits dispelled Ane’s preconceived ideology that was instilled in her as she was growing up that the kava space was unsafe. Her family had warned her that she would not be treated well. There was a belief that the kava consuming environment was not a safe space for women as they may be treated like an object of some sort. However, even some of the sceptical participants could see the benefit of kava consumption if it was in a safe environment, and an alternative to alcohol or drugs. It was less expensive than alcohol and provided a social space for friends to gather.

The intergenerational belief that Ane had in her mind changed once she consumed kava.

“The version that they had in their minds of a faikava was the exact same version that I had in my mind growing up as in like “don’t go there, it’s not a safe space for women to be in, um women will be treated like an object sort of thing”. And that like, you know like, it’s just not safe” – Ane (C)

Due to what some believe is the evolution of KRP, kava groups may provide a safe environment for women especially as an alternative to alcohol and nightclubbing. For some participants who did not

agree with women consuming kava, they could see the benefits of kava consumption for women as an alternative to alcohol or drugs and being in a safe environment with family and friends.

“I see the transition we have about kava, is actually different with what we grew up with. But if it is to adapt to be able to fit in with a safe environment for the women here in New Zealand, I’m happy for them to have it. ... if it is safer for them to drink, compared to alcohol and drugs, then I’ll support it” – Sela (T)

Financially kava is more affordable and readily accessible. It provides a safe environment where one can meet up with others and have a conversation over a kava bowl.

“Kava is less expensive, so they’re more likely to keep doing it, and its more accessible, and its um they go there, and they meet up with friends and they talk and so forth ah there its very different from nightclubbing and going out drinking.” – Lose (C)

As one participant had a preconceived idea that KRP were not a safe space to be in, through her own personal experience she has discovered that it is a safe environment. As she becomes more entrenched in KRP, she, like the other participants see the benefits of kava as opposed to alcohol or drugs. It is more affordable than alcohol, easily accessible, and you do not need to go to a nightclub to enjoy the social aspects of it. Some social aspects of kava consumption for some participants included mirroring the men’s kava groups.

4.3.9 If it’s Good for the Men, then it’s Good for the Women

Consumer participants believed that what the men can do, so can the women. This included setting up the kava group session and including a male tou’a with the intent to mirror the men’s kava groups. This was purely based on fun. Sometimes that male tou’a is a relative, other times he may be a suitor for one of the women in the kava group. It is light-hearted and intended to be a fun night for the women and the male tou’a. Having a male tou’a has been met with some resistance from the men as they know there will be flirting, and they do not want their women involved with that.

“I mean if you’re wanting to have fun and you know, we’ll invite a guy to be a tou’a. And we’ll literally mirror what the guys do when there is a woman tou’a and ah you know we ah the girls flirt, or we tease him and stuff like that and um it just depends. Like sometimes the guy will be a tou’a that is known to us and he’s like whatever. And ‘eva, then there’s a guy who is actually there as a suitor for a girl you know and stuff”. – Lose (C)

“Mostly when we have the kava, they call it the girls kava night. So, this is our girl’s kava night so I want a man to serve the kava we will not serve them kava. And always my cousin’s um husband will serve it.” – ‘Alisi (C)

Not all men are supportive of their wives being part of a kava group due to their ideas around the flirting that takes place. One participant said that husbands were not happy with the women having a male tou’a especially when they know how they treat the female tou’a at their kava groups.

“There is some sort of resistance from the men for the girls to get their kava circles up because ... they’re actually going to a kava circle where it’s a known thing there is going to be flirting around.” - Lose (C)

The kava consuming participants find it amusing mirroring the men’s kava group. The resistance from their men is solely around the flirting aspects of KRP. Nonetheless, for the kava consuming participants, having a male tou’a is about fun and not taking it too seriously.

4.3.10 Tou’a Consuming Kava

The final theme in this chapter regards the tou’a consuming kava in her role. There were two opposing views regarding the tou’a consuming kava. One participant who is a kava consumer felt that a tou’a is the only woman in the kava circle and if she consumes during a kalapu kava session, she is devaluing herself. The other felt at times there is a need for the tou’a to consume the kava.

*“When you go and serve kava, I used to see a lot of women doing that but when you actually go and sit there among the men and drink kava in a kalapu, its um to me, you’re just devaluing yourself.”
- ‘Alisi (C)*

The other opinion, which was from a tou’a, who shared that she would consume kava in a faikava session especially if the men were drinking slowly and prolonging the session, she would consume the kava to deplete the kava supply and therefore finish the kava session faster.

“Women who drink kava it’s ok. I’ve drank kava. That’s what I do like if I see that the kava will take a little bit longer last longer than when I should finish, then I started drinking the kava so it will finish quickly.” – Siu (T)

The tou’a consuming kava was not usual and if a tou’a consumed kava in a kalapu kava setting amongst the men, then she was devaluing herself. There were exceptions to when the tou’a may

consume kava. That was when the men were drinking the kava slowly, and the tou'a knows it will be a very long night if she does not do something about it. That is when she may consume, to speed up the reduction of the kava in the bowl.

4.3.11 Summary

Kava consumption for Tongan women is increasing and being explored in many settings. This section provided a snapshot of ways women consume their kava and their belief systems that inform their decision to consume kava. All participants had strong views on women consuming kava and this chapter was able to capture their perspectives on why women should or should not consume kava, the practices that inform these opinions, how kava consumption for women has evolved, and the benefits of kava consumption. These diverse opinions on what may be considered a tapu (sacred) subject, highlights the value of this rich and meaningful information that may be formed from two opposing views, yet belong to one culture. One view is that it is going against tradition whereas another view is that women who consume kava is honouring their heritage and the sacrifices made by women around KRP. Nevertheless, one thing they all agreed on is that it should be a choice that women have, and not be seen as a 'men only' commodity.

4.3.12 Discussion

One of the main areas of focus for this research was to gain some understanding of how the participants felt about women consuming kava. Figure 3 identifies what the participants view is regarding whether women should consume kava or not.

Figure 2

Should Women Consume Kava

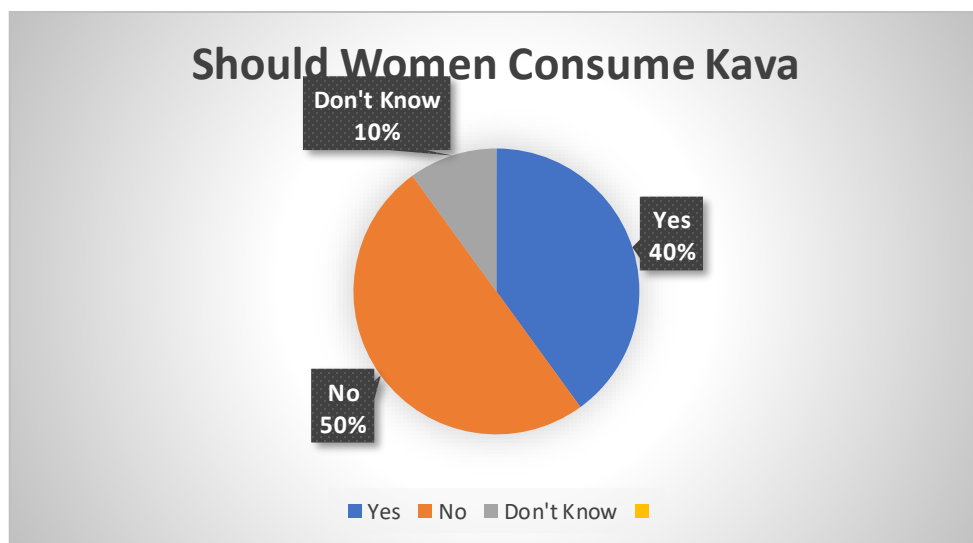


Figure 3 highlights the slight majority of $n=5$ were against women consuming kava, $n=4$ were pro women consuming kava, and $n=1$ was undecided. Of the $n=5$ that believed women should not consume kava, was a belief steeped in their traditional understanding that kava is for the men. None of them were comfortable with the idea that women should consume kava and do not understand why they would want to. For the $n=1$ undecided participant, they were not supportive of women consuming kava nevertheless, they felt that if a woman wanted to consume kava, then she should have the freedom to make that choice. The $n=4$ consisted of the 3 female kava consumers and the one tou'a that would consume kava to hasten the depletion of kava so that the kava group would not go all night.

From what these participants report, the number of women consuming kava is increasing, and it is not just among the Tongan women but from all nationalities. As women break from the implied traditional and cultural norms of the Tongan society, KRP are evolving to be a space of inclusivity. It is not an exclusive club just for men. It is becoming a place for women to share and discuss matters in an environment that supports their belief systems and values their identity. Although there is still resistance in the community regarding women consuming kava, there are factions in the wider community that are supportive and encouraging women to be involved in KRP.

Universities are bringing KRP into a space that invites all to participate. This may be challenging for some traditionalists to accept as the ideology of faka'apa'apa is not upheld, and brothers, sisters, cousins, and so forth may sit together in a kava group and consume kava together. According to Ikuna Education (2020), faka'apa'apa means respect, acknowledgment, and honouring. It is shown through dress, social manners, and encompasses a way of relating and defining relationships. Some participants do not feel that mixing with cousins or other family members is an issue instead, they see this as a wonderful opportunity for family members to strengthen their relationships. Whereas other participants see it as tapu (sacred), and not to be breached.

Concerns over cultural appropriation were raised with members of the community stating that people, and in particular a university kava group, were '*stripping kava of its cultural roots*' (Tupou, 2017). It was suggested that groups such as this were not honouring traditional aspects of KRP and were being disrespectful to the culture of KRP. Edmond Fehoko PhD and kava proponent shared his opinion that the modernisation of KRP is practiced across many cultures nowadays, and he was confident that the groups in the university were following similar protocol (Tupou, 2017). In response to this article, Fehoko (2017) states that KRP have evolved from the traditional formal setting to social gatherings where they drink kava, talk, share experiences with one another, and some in the group view kava as an alternative to alcohol.

As KRP continue to evolve in various areas, it will entail going out of what has previously been the norm for the majority. Some of the participants are adamant drinking kava is a man's thing and stupid

of the women to drink it, especially when the taste is disgusting. One participant suggested that if the women are consuming kava in a group setting to bond together, then maybe they could do that while drinking 'otai instead of kava? In some Tongan communities especially among those from 'Eueiki where the legend of kava originates, there is an understanding of women consuming kava that may not align with those from other parts of Tonga. Those from this small island in the Tongatapu archipelago understand that kava itself radiates femininity. Through the young girl sacrificed and gone the way of the land, kava, femininity, and fonua are one. It is a woman's right to honour and uphold the values of sacrifice, love, and loyalty to the fonua, culture, God, and sovereignty through consuming kava. In this research it is suggested that when women are challenged about their kava consumption, if she is from 'Eueiki, there is no challenge. No one can argue with her that she is sinning or going against her culture because it is believed to be her right, and when she speaks, others need to listen and respect her understanding and knowledge around women and KRP.

This topic around tradition and women consuming kava highlights the issues that arise around what is traditionally Tongan, and what is considered tradition but is technically influenced post foreign influence. This doctoral research has gathered information that may bring about some robust discussion to further knowledge. This is one of those areas for discussion. Women consuming kava, and whether this is tradition or not. Participants in this doctoral research are passionate about where they sit regarding traditional components of KRP. Some female kava consuming participants adhere to traditions prior to foreign influence, some participants base their beliefs around post foreign influence, and some participants consume kava for the many social, physical, spiritual, and psychological benefits kava provides.

The benefits the women kava consumers felt through participating in KRP, are why many other members of the community both in Aotearoa and globally are seeking out products that contain kava. The participants acknowledge that consuming kava relieves anxiety and stress, it gives them added awareness and confidence, and a sense of calm whilst being alert. This has been evidenced in other research where kava has been proven to have anxiolytic properties. According to Savage et al., (2015) it was found that when extracted traditionally, kava is deemed safe and effective in the treatment of anxiety. It is therefore not surprising that kava is gaining popularity in its use and why the participants of this research find consuming kava beneficial during stressful periods.

Not only are the kava contents itself beneficial for kava consumers, but the environment in which they consume it, can be of benefit to one's mental health. Participating in KRP for women kava consumers is often done in a place that is fun. It is inclusive, and often conducted in their home or another group member's home. Unlike the men who often attend faikava on their own, the women tend to have a more family friendly environment. With this environment, mothers may consume kava with other

members of their family who do not share the same gender. This bringing together of family of different generations, friends, and colleagues, is what some believe to be the true essence of kava:

Chapter 4.4 The Spouse of a Male Kava Consumer

The aim of accessing the experience of a spouse of the Tongan male kava consumer was to highlight the benefits of his kava consumption, and the challenges that may have arisen that has impacted on the marital relationship. The spouse perspective was pursued to provide information on how she perceives her spouse's KRP and how his choices impact her.

“Kava today is not safe. It's not safe if they don't do it in a proper way.” – Sina (S)

Introduction

Tongan women speaking up and sharing their husband's association with KRP and the impact it has on them as individuals, and the family as a whole can be confronting. These women participants were aware that there may be some negative responses from members of the Tongan community regarding their comments. Nevertheless, they were prepared to accept the consequences in order to share their perspective and be a voice to other women that may have similar experiences. This research has provided an opportunity for these women to share their experience voluntarily, so it may inform the wider community of what it was like for them to be married to a Tongan male, who consumes/d kava.

For this chapter the research will use the term 'faikava' (to do kava). As discussed in this research, we have used the term kava group because of the variance in what the participants defined as faikava. In this chapter, the spouses were clear that their husbands attended faikava in someone's home, and the term faikava was used by all of the spouses. Being a spouse of a male kava consumer may look very different from one spouse to another. Some women may see several benefits from her husband attending faikava, while others may feel it has a negative impact on the family, which may lead to feelings of resistance to support faikava. Then there is the range of those that fall in between these ends of the spectrum. The spouses in this research have different experiences and perspectives, yet there were areas on which they agreed that may be beneficial or detrimental. During the talanoa, there were common themes that were extracted from their narrative. They are as follows:

- Faikava – What it Means to a Spouse
- Why my Husband Chooses to Faikava
- Evolving Kava Related Practices
- The Tou'a and the Men
- Faikava and Infidelity
- Faikava and Spirituality from a Spouse Perspective
- Consuming Kava and the Physical Impact on My Husband
- Mental Health and Faikava
- The Key to Navigating Faikava

4.4.1 Faikava – What it Means to the Spouse of a Male Kava Consumer

At the beginning of the talanoa, the spouse was asked what their understanding of KRP was. All spouses agreed that if you are going to faikava, then it is important to do it traditionally and adhere to the cultural standards. Cultural standards to them were that the men are respectful of all those in attendance at faikava, and that they will uphold their Tongan, church, and family values. This includes if they have a tou'a, then they have to respect her in the role that she performs. It was also an integral part of honouring cultural traditions and significant life events.

“If we want to carry on traditional with the kava, it has to be done properly. If you want a tou'a there it has to be done properly. The surrounding, the men out there, have to respect the tou'a.” – Sina (S)

Like other participants, Vina states that traditionally, faikava is a necessary component of Tongan culture and history. Consuming kava signifies the importance of cultural milestones, church gatherings, funerals, and other significant life events. Kava has an important role in celebrations for the people of Tonga, and especially those descended from 'Eueiki.

“Like at the funerals people sit around and drink kava or like church um, that's what they do with the kava. Like the whole 'Eueiki kava, celebratory.” – Vina (S)

KRP play a significant role in cultural events and important milestones in one's life. For these participants, faikava is an iconic and integral part of the Tongan culture for their husbands. The spouses state that for their husbands, it was more than just the cultural expectations or protocols that motivated them to faikava.

4.4.2 Why my Husband Chooses to Faikava

Some of the husbands had grown up with faikava being an innate and accepted part of their upbringing. From a young age some of the men were encouraged to faikava. It was an opportunity to learn from their elders in the community through song and sharing of personal experiences. Faikava provided a space where the men could form strong relationships with other men who were like-minded and would help them with any problems that may arise in their lives. Within the faikava group there were opportunities for making improvements in their lives and organising other subgroups within the faikava group. It was also seen as an alternative to alcohol even though it was becoming more expensive, it was still a preferred alternative.

Faikava holds significant cultural value for spouses whose husbands believe it plays a crucial role in learning cultural practices. Nisi spoke of what her husband had shared with her about his life growing up in Tonga and going faikava.

“Those boys, they come and sit with the old man. Some they listen to their singing, their stories, they share good things from how they said they learn from old people. But at the same time, they drink kava.” – Nisi (S)

Faikava for these young men was a way of connecting to other members of the community while learning their culture and gaining life skills for their future. Although some do not like to drink kava because of the taste or feeling it gives them, there were some strong motivating factors to still want to faikava that supersede the distaste for the kava drink itself.

“He still doesn’t like kava, but to go there to bond with the friends, to catch up with the friends. – Sina (S)

Sina’s comments highlight how faikava provides an opportunity where their husbands felt they could talk about anything that was important to them while drinking kava. Spouses were supportive of this and that their men could go talanoa with other men. It wasn’t all about drinking kava.

“Drink, talk something is cool aye? That why some men they doing those things.” – Vina (S)

The bringing together of a group of like-minded men in a forum that enhanced the connection between the men through the mutual consumption of kava, was believed to be a beneficial component of faikava. The connection between the men in the kava group is paramount and having a safe space to build camaraderie. As the men share their challenges and successes, it enhances their relationships at the faikava and their life in general. The freedom to talk while drinking kava was to the spouse a benefit for their family and a reason for their husband to want to continue to go faikava. If the husband was struggling with something he needed some advice on so that he could improve himself, he could talk about this to the men in the kava group. This benefited the spouse because her husband would be less stressed at home, and she felt safe that he had good friends to provide advice and extra support, when implementing changes to improve himself.

“We have a kava party. They know that that’s when they get to meet everyone, and they talk about families, and they talk about things that they need to be improve with you know.” – Sina (S)

Sina echoed what other women participants shared about the importance of the kava group as a support to each other. When things were not going too well at home, Sina believed that it was valuable for her husband to go and speak to the men in the faikava group to get some guidance and a different perspective on their family issues. Sometimes he would prefer to seek counsel from the men and also use faikava as a distraction from the issues at home.

“If we have problems at home and he doesn’t want to talk to me, and then he goes to and mingle with the men.” – Sina (S)

For several kava groups the support for each other extends beyond the kava group and the men check in with one another especially during challenging times. Nisi tells of the concern the men in the kava group had for their family and the phone calls they would make when they were not meeting in person during faikava to provide extra help when needed.

“They all help my husband. Sometimes they on the phone. You know, without them, maybe my husband is still drinking, maybe my husband we already separated heh?” – Nisi (S)

The extended support and desire to improve one’s life is why some of the participants support their husband’s involvement in KRP. Some faikava groups use the faikava as a forum to run programs or schemes alongside the faikava. One group provide an opportunity for the men in the kava group to contribute money to their own Christmas club account. Each week when the men were able, they would give money to the treasurer of the kava group to deposit into the group bank account on their behalf. Accounts were kept meticulously, and in November they would have their money returned. Spouses stated this was an effective scheme and was extremely practical.

“They have a club. And that club they collect money for Christmas. And it helps me and my children. That’s our shopping for Christmas and what we want to send to Tonga for family” – Nisi (S)

The financial wellbeing of the family is important to the spouses. For the spouses in this research, the money being spent on faikava was not an issue for them. They said their husbands were financially responsible and would not spend more than \$20 a night to contribute to the purchase of kava.

“The most that he spends on the kava is \$20 you know. I’m happy with my husband cos when he goes there, he knows that our family is a first priority for him.” – Sina (S)

Despite the husbands not spending too much money on the kava itself, the spouses are aware of the cost of kava in comparison to alcohol. Nisi reported that kava used to be a cheap alternative to alcohol. However, it is becoming increasingly more expensive as its popularity increases globally.

“Kava is very expensive nowadays. You know the 1 kilo, or 2 kilo is one hundred dollars something or two hundred. Three hundred in Australia.” – Nisi (S)

With faikava being an innate part of some of the husband’s upbringing, they are drawn to faikava and the many benefits they receive through their involvement. Being able to sit with men who could give advice, teach them cultural and life lessons, bond together through music and kava, and feel a connection with the other members of the faikava group was important to the participant’s husbands. Apart from kava still being cost effective and an alternative to alcohol, it was clear that the main motivating factors for the men wanting to faikava was the camaraderie and friendships that were formed. Some spouses felt that this connection to the group or the want to be around the men was becoming a little too strong and the men were wanting to faikava more often.

4.4.3 Evolving Kava Related Practices

One of the main evolving KRP is the amount of kava being consumed and the frequency. Participants felt that this was going away from the traditional aspect because their spouses were consuming now for reasons other than specific celebratory or cultural events. Therefore, with increased consumption, there was a feeling that the faikava space was no longer a safe space for their husband as cultural aspects of faikava were not followed.

“Yeah, traditional is changing. Of course, yes. Because the kava not supposed to be like they did now. Those old days, the kava just supposed to happen on main occasion. Not like now, every week! Kava, kava, kava, kava.” – Nisi (S)

Some spouses raised concerns that faikava was evolving from the traditional faikava to becoming a space that was no longer a safe space for the men in the kava group. They believed this was due to some men in the kava group no longer adhering to basic cultural aspects.

“Kava today is not safe. It’s not safe if they don’t do it in a proper way.” – Sina (S)

For these participants, they felt that with the increasing frequency of faikava, there was less commitment from the faikava group to adhere to the basic cultural components of faikava. The faikava space was evolving and it was no longer a space that spouses were comfortable for their husband to be in. It was evolving from something more traditional to something different. For some spouses, their husbands conveyed that they felt that the presence of some tou’a changed the dynamics of the faikava.

4.4.4 The Tou’a and the Men

The role of the tou’a in faikava has been the subject of much controversy in recent years. For the spouse in this research, there was an understanding amongst them that when a tou’a was present in the faikava their husband was attending, then she (the tou’a) would be honouring her traditional role. This implies that she will dress and act appropriately. In the talanoa with the spouses, the term finemātu’a arose. Participant Langi stated in Tongan culture ta’ahine referred to a woman of royal status. All commoners were known as ‘finemātu’a’, regardless of whether you were a virgin or not. Sina believes this has changed and explained that for her the term finemātu’a meant women who have had children. This is outwardly expressed by the way the women sit. Finemātu’a sit with crossed legs whereas a young girl who is pure and innocent will sit with her legs to the side. Sina shared that when you walk into a room you can tell immediately the women who have had children and the women who haven’t by the way that they sit. Nisi expressed the importance of tou’a sitting with her legs to the side. This marks respect for herself, and the respect she will command from those that are present in the kava group.

“Finemātu’a is like a mum, a single mum. You know they’re all under the finemātu’a. They usually sit cross legs. The ones who put both legs on the side, they’re the single ones, they’re the pure one. But it’s not only kava, if you go to an occasion, they be seated on the floor you can tell the difference you know.” – Sina (S)

However, the way the tou’a sat with her legs was the least of the worries that spouses were concerned about. There were concerns about the men who faikava and want to impress the tou’a but do not take care of the family at home. There was concern about the tou’a who is cheeky and dances with the men, there was concern that when you take the tradition out of the faikava, then ‘stupid’ things will happen leading to ruptured relationships. If faikava is traditional, then the way the tou’a sits will be a factor in that. These concerns were perpetuated by the environment that the spouse believed their husband was going into. Having a tou’a was something that the spouses accepted was part of the

faikava. For them a tou'a was part of their tradition and it was expected that some of the time their husbands went faikava there may be a tou'a there to serve the kava.

“They love to bring the girl to sit there and serve the kava for them.” – Vina (S)

There was a sense among the spouse that when the tou'a is there, the men will want to impress the tou'a. This may be by giving the impression that he has a lot of money. The men may not always have extra money, but pride, and the desire to make an impression on the tou'a at times drives their behaviour and they may overlook their values around family.

“Another reason why we don't like our husband to go. Because they go and put money there but at home there's no bread, and butter and milk at home for the family.” – Sina (S)

The choices and actions made by the men may cause a rupture in the marital relationship and lead to broken trust. When trust is lost, it makes it difficult for a spouse to be supportive of her husband going to faikava. These feelings of mistrust are amplified when the spouse hears stories of the men in the kava group flirting and dancing with the tou'a. There is some suspicion that it is the tou'a who is making the advances and encouraging the men in the kava group to dance and act inappropriately with them.

“Some of the ladies they been cheeky. They know those men they already married. They just come and the way they talk, the way they dress up, the way they what! They just get up and bow to this man, even my husband, they go and dance and tau'olunga and thing heh?” – Nisi (S)

These ruptured relationships and trust issues are perpetuated by videos being posted on social media. The wives of men in some kava groups are seeing videos displayed on social media that show their men slow dance with the tou'a. This is upsetting for the spouse and highlights to her that the faikava is no longer being conducted in a traditional way which exacerbates her feelings of mistrust and betrayal.

“Nowadays the wives are getting mad with their husband going there and they go stand up you know in front of everyone and slow dance with the tou'a. And everybody video it you know what been happening and put it up on social media. And everybody seen it. It doesn't look good to us wives of seeing our husbands go, supposed to go faikava, but instead of going faikava you know to doing the traditional way of doing it, they going there and they doing all these things. Stupid things with tou'a. You know it doesn't look good with us. And that's when broken families ended up. – Sina (S)

All the participants in this research expressed concern over KRP and the negative consequences of the choice's men are at times making within this setting. The most common concern that they all had was the infidelity and breakdown of the family unit as a result of the choices some men in the kava group were making. The way a tou'a sits and what that may represent to the men in the faikava group may be considered factors contributing to the veering away from tradition in a faikava setting. Nevertheless, one must remember that faikava and honouring tradition or not, does not lead to infidelity, distrust or ruptured relationships. It is the choices that these men are making whether they want to honour their commitments they have made to their spouses or make a choice that will lead to the breakdown of their family and relationships. This is a choice that the man has made.

4.4.5 Faikava and Infidelity

For a couple of spouses in the research, they believed that their husbands' connection to KRP led to infidelity, and in one case a broken marriage. There was a belief that faikava could lead to temptation. For Nisi, her husband would go faikava but then also drink alcohol. He would then go to other places and eventually committed adultery with other women. When the men kept their burgeoning relationship with the tou'a from the men in the kava group, they were less likely to be teased and reminded of their family commitments. Many participants believed that money was a motivating factor for a tou'a wanting to pursue a relationship with a married member of the kava group and therefore the development of the relationship was not one-sided. When infidelity did occur, it did not always end up in the complete breakdown of a marriage if the husband and wife had support from church leaders and the men in the kava group. Both Nisi and Vina experienced infidelity in their marriage where their husband's unfaithfulness began through their involvement with faikava.

Nisi knew that it was not the faikava itself that caused her husband to cheat, nevertheless she felt that her husband attending faikava provided opportunities for him to experiment with alcohol and flirt with other women leading to adultery.

“At the beginning I had problem with him because of the kava. ...He went to the faikava and some other friends and things they did stupid things you know. He went with the lady. I don't know how many ladies.” – Nisi (S)

Vina and her husband worked out of town, and when they came home for the weekends, her husband would go faikava during the weekend from 6pm until 6am the next day. Vina noticed that her husband spent more money at faikava than usual. When Vina questioned him, he was evasive and gave reasons that did not make sense to Vina. Vina knew some of the kava group and knew that they had acquired a tou'a who was in Aotearoa to study. Vina became suspicious when her husband would stay longer at faikava, and she would find him on the phone early in the morning. Money was missing from their bank account which she later found out was her husband spending it on the tou'a. This added up to a

significant amount of money missing from their bank account which risked Vina losing her home. Her husband was spending their mortgage money on the tou'a. Most of the men in the kava group were unaware of the developing relationship between Vina's husband and the tou'a. Her husband kept it secret from them because he knew how they would react to the news. The men would tease him about the fact that he has a family and should be with his children.

“Because the men in the faikava they gonna teasing him. Some men say something to him to thinking that he got the kids and things like that.” – Vina (S)

The relationship with the tou'a developed as her husband spent more time at faikava and then visiting with the tou'a out of the faikava. Eventually after a lot of deceit, betrayal, and financial stress, Vina said she was determined to be strong and do the best thing for her and her children. Vina and her husband decided to end the marriage and her husband established his relationship with the tou'a who is the same age as their youngest daughter.

“That's why she likes him because I know my husband give money to her. That's why we broke up. Because the kava thing. Because he always went drink kava. Because the girl was ahh that's the one that he went with yeah.” – Vina (S)

Despite what happened in Vina's experience, Nisi's relationship outcome was different. Nisi was prepared to end things. However, it was through her husband's faikava friends and church leaders that they were able to heal their relationship. This reinforces the strength and support the men find in the kava group from other men to help resolve personal issues they experience.

“All his friends love him. They understand the situation that he is in at the moment. The kava is a good and bad. The good thing is all the men support my husband. They talk and support to help my husband understand the importance of family.” – Nisi (S)

These participant's experiences were different and unique to themselves however, there were common threads in their narratives. Both husband's journey of infidelity began through their involvement with KRP, the women who they were unfaithful with knew they were married, both of these women were wanting a permanent relationship with these men whether that be for the purpose of money or permanent residency. Both men's kava groups eventually knew of their infidelity, and both kava groups showed some form of support to the man and his wife. Where the participant's experiences deviate is through how the spouse and her husband chose to deal with the rupture in their relationship, and what outcome they decided was best for them as a couple, and as a family unit.

4.4.6 Faikava and Spirituality from a Spouse Perspective

There were mixed feelings about this topic from the spouses. First, it was a matter of defining what spirituality meant to them and then how that was processed by the husband. Sina believed the environment the men were in could affect their spirituality. She felt that if her husband was in a kava group with men who held similar beliefs and values, then it would strengthen his spirituality. Nonetheless, if there were members of the kava group who did not adhere to her husband's belief systems and standards, then the conversation may not be conducive to enhancing one's spirituality.

“To affect their spirituality, it depends on the surroundings, it depends on the men there If there are only members, there from our beliefs you know. It would be good, because the way they talk and everything, They're from the same belief. But there's other men from other beliefs, you know they'll have, different beliefs, different standards. And that's when you know it affects them, because of what other people will say.” – Sina (S)

“It, kind of like eats away at you, mentally, spiritually, it does, when you're in that space in that zone.” - Seini (T).

4.4.7 Consuming Kava and the Physical Impact on My Husband

The spouses shared the physical issues their husbands were experiencing and how kava was seen to play a part in exacerbating health issues or helping them. The ethnicity of the doctor seemed to factor in how they approached the spouse's involvement in KRP. When Sina's husband developed issues with his liver during his initial consultation with a Tongan doctor, he was asked if he consumed kava. When Sina's spouse shared that he would only consume kava intermittently and on special occasions, the doctor was emphatic that her spouse stops drinking kava as it was detrimental to his health and will increase the damage to his liver.

“The doctor says, ‘you know kava is a no for your health, it damages your liver, you know it doesn't help your liver’. So, with his, it affects his you know his physical body. Because the more he goes there and he drinks kava, it's gonna damage his body” – Sina (S).

For another spouse whose husband has chronic health issues, he was under the care of a pālagi (European) doctor. When he became unwell several years ago, he gave up drinking kava and chose to follow the health treatment plan the doctor had prescribed including the use of medication. After a few years of abstaining from kava, Nisi's husband had not regained his full strength and decided to resume attending faikava. Although he attended it less frequently than previously, he found that he

gained his strength again. His doctor was curious as to what made him feel better, and when they said it was the kava, he was Ok with it as long as it was not mixed with alcohol.

“Maybe it depends on those but for me, my husband, I don’t know about those other men. But with me and my husband now, I see if he didn’t drink kava this week, next week then he feels weak.” – Nisi (S)

The physical impacts that faikava had on these participant’s spouses were on the opposite ends of the spectrum. One was emphatically encouraged by a Tongan doctor to cease faikava as it was damaging to his liver, whereas the other spouse who was treated by a pālagi doctor was curious how the spouse was able to gain strength from consuming kava.

4.4.8 Mental Health and Faikava

Understanding that physical, spiritual, and mental health are all interconnected, if a spouse is experiencing issues relating to spirituality or physical health, then it will affect their mental health. In this section we can see there are clear factors that impact positively on the participant’s husband’s mental health and wellbeing. The main concern of the spouses regarding mental health was the detrimental impact and disregard of cultural protocols witnessed by their husband. For two spouses, both their husbands preferred faikava without a tou’a present. They would ideally have one of the kava group members to serve the kava. When a tou’a was present, the spouse believed that when their husband witnessed married men flirting with the tou’a and disrespecting her, it was distressing. Their husband was disturbed to see a fellow member not valuing the family, and church principles/beliefs that they professed to follow.

“Because for example, if that person is a married man, then going there and seeing all this flirting to the tou’a and everything, and he do that you know, it’s gonna have an impact on their mental health.” – Sina (S)

The main negative impact that the participant’s reported of their spouses was when there was a tou’a present and the men chose to disregard their values to flirt or act inappropriately with the tou’a. For some of the men present, they were uncomfortable with this behaviour because they often know the faikava group member’s family. Seeing the married men’s inappropriate behaviour whilst knowing their family is at home, can be very hard for the men who witness. There is a fear that if it comes out in the open what goes on in the faikava, then not only relationships with the husband may be divided but also with their family.

4.4.9 The Key to Navigating Faikava

Trust and communication were major themes for the spouses and how that played out in the family dynamics around KRP. When the trust between a husband and wife is supported by open honest communication, reinforced by the husband's loyalty to his family, and he is committed to do his duties at home before going to faikava, there is more likely to be support from the family for the husband to go faikava. It was clear from the spouse that if they trusted their husband, then him going to faikava was not a problem. It was important for the spouse to support her husband especially when he was working hard to take care of his responsibilities at home and was taking good care of the family.

“Because the trust I have for him, I know what he's like. He's not going there to flirt with the tou'a everything. I just wanna give him the opportunity to go and mingle with all of his friends.” – Sina (S)

The communication between the husband and wife is vital. Nisi sees for herself that lack of communication between some faikava attendees and their wives. The women do not trust their husbands and sit outside where the faikava is held knowing that their husband has been dishonest with them in the past. The husband may say there is no tou'a tonight but when the ladies look on social media, they can see there was a tou'a present.

“I try to figure it out why those ladies have problems with the husband. Because of the husband telling lies to them. Because of the husband 'oh ah, no there's no tou'a tonight'. But there is a tou'a. They should talk to each other.” – Nisi (S)

Through open and honest communication, and a desire to change, these relationships can be mended. It was due to a health issue that forced Nisi and her husband to reassess their relationship and make changes to strengthen it. This included being open and honest to each other regarding their feelings around KRP and how it was affecting the family unit. With external help and support, this couple have managed to build up trust again and make the necessary changes. This included Nisi's husband taking care of his household responsibilities before going to faikava. This took the pressure off Nisi from feeling like she was having to do it all herself. Now she feels supported and they both decide together when he can go to faikava and when he is needed to stay home.

“I am working he do the washing bring the washing tell the girls do this do that you know. When everything done then he go faikava.” - Nisi (S)

The spouses in this research shared the calm feelings they have around their men and faikava when they know they can trust them to not flirt with the tou'a or be part of a faikava group that disrespects the tou'a. As they have learned to navigate challenges they have faced in the past, they are confident with the trust they have, and the open honest communication with their husband has made them secure in their relationships. They report that their husbands are hard workers and take care of the needs of the family first. When home is sorted, the spouse is more likely to be supportive of her husband and his KRP.

4.4.10 Summary

The willingness of Tongan women to speak up and share their experiences regarding their husband's association with KRP and its impact on themselves and their families is a courageous act. These women participants were fully aware that their comments might be met with negative responses from certain members of the Tongan community. Nevertheless, they were prepared to accept the potential consequences to share their perspectives and serve as a voice for other women who may have similar experiences. Through this doctoral research, these women have been given the opportunity to voluntarily share their experiences, providing valuable insights that can inform the wider community about the challenges and realities of being married to a Tongan male who consumes kava. In this chapter, the term "faikava" (to do kava) is used to describe the husbands' participation in kava-related gatherings.

It is hoped that this research will foster dialogue and promote a more inclusive and supportive environment within the Tongan community, where the voices and experiences of these women are acknowledged, respected, and taken into consideration. The role of being a spouse to a male kava consumer is diverse and can vary greatly from one individual to another. Each woman may perceive and experience the impact of her husband's involvement in faikava differently. Some spouses may view faikava attendance as beneficial, recognizing the social and cultural significance it holds for their husbands and the community. On the other hand, some spouses may feel that faikava has a negative impact on the family dynamics and may resist supporting their husband's participation.

These findings highlight the importance of acknowledging the diversity of experiences among spouses of male kava consumers. It emphasizes the need for open communication, understanding, and mutual respect within spousal relationships to navigate the potential challenges and benefits that arise from faikava participation. By fostering dialogue and supporting each other's perspectives, spouses can work towards finding a balance that accommodates both individual needs and the well-being of the family unit.

As reported by the spouses of male kava consumers, we see that faikava has many beneficial components that have a positive impact on the family. They see faikava as a place where their husband can have fun with his friends, strengthen relationships, find support and advice from like-

mindful men who form the kava group. With what some spouses would see as the evolution of KRP the role of the tou'a changing from traditional to something different, it is clear that there are situations where men who are involved in KRP make choices that contradict the family values the spouses thought these men upheld. This can lead to infidelity and in one case, the end of their marriage. In another case, with the support of the men in the kava group the marriage relationship was able to recover from the infidelity. It is not the kava itself that forces these men to act against what their spouses believe are their values. Contributing factors have been identified to include any of the following:

- The faikava environment
- The relationship with the tou'a that develops over time.
- Marital issues
- Spiritual, physical, and mental health challenges

Nevertheless, when there has been a betrayal between husband and wife, it does not need to end in the breakdown of the marriage if rebuilding the marriage is what both parties desire. Building trust, prioritising family responsibilities, and having open honest communication can lead to strengthening and rebuilding the marriage.

4.4.11 Discussion

Research has consistently shown the positive aspects of men and faikava (Fehoko, 2015; Nosa & Ofanoa, 2009). The spouse in this chapter shared how their husbands were encouraged from a young age to faikava for several reasons. One was to stay away from the temptations of alcohol and drugs, another was to sit with the elders of their village and learn their culture, language, and other helpful life skills. There would be very few other forums where a young man could sit around for several hours with older men and talanoa, play music, and share a drink. Fehoko (2015) conveys the importance of faikava as being a place where young men born in Aotearoa were given the opportunity to learn their Tongan language, cultural values, and knowledge from the previous generation. In this environment, one must acknowledge the concept of tauhi vā. Kalavite (2019) states that in the transference of 'ilo (knowledge), and poto (skills), the vā influences the relational space. Ka'ili (2017) terms this as the space between people and things. Ilaiu (n.d.) emphasises vā as the relationship between the two bodies and how the relationship is nurtured and maintained. When we look at what the spouse says regarding their husbands and strength, they gain from the men in the faikava, we acknowledge that the relationships are harmonious, and strengthened through mutual respect, camaraderie, and connecting through a mutual medium of faikava. When these relationships or tauhi vā are no longer socio spatially harmonious, there comes disruption or contention to the relationships, and this is where contention or the relationships within the faikava group are weakened. If the vā is nurtured and strengthened by the men in the faikava, then it will become a place where the men want

to go to, where they can find support, and genuine friendships that will help them live a life aligned with their values.

Bringing a tou'a into this environment can augment the vā when her role is respected, and she is also nurtured in this space. When a tou'a is not respected and her presence in that space is not nurtured in a healthy or appropriate way, then the vā or relationships within that space may be ruptured. For example, if a member of the faikava is not comfortable with the way some of the men are interacting with the tou'a, it may cause friction between him, the other men, and the tou'a. This may be felt by all who are present, and the space is no longer harmonious and may have a negative impact on those who are there. As Wendt (1996) states, the vā is the space that holds each individual entity together, within that space is the context that gives meaning to what is happening in the space. If the context changes, the vā, and relationships will inevitably change.

Although some of the spouse's husbands preferred to faikava without a tou'a, there were many times when a tou'a was present. It was then that the men would make the choice as to how they would interact with her or how they would let other men in the group talk with her. Because one of the husbands had experienced infidelity through meeting others at faikava, when he repented and made the decision to be faithful to his spouse, his spouse reported that he became extremely harsh to the tou'a and if she attempted any kind of flirting with the men in the group then he would make her leave. This behaviour resulted in the group setting higher standards at faikava and no longer allowing any disrespectful behaviour to or from the tou'a. This fostered an environment where the focus was less on the tou'a and more on the men's talanoa. The onward effect was the spouses were able to feel safe that their husbands were not acting inappropriately, and he was in a place where if they had any challenges as a family, he would find support to help with his marriage.

Not all faikava groups have the same standards, and as you will read from the tou'a experience, some kava groups have instilled very low standards. With the spouse participants in this research, all husbands were attending faikava which had church or community leaders present. Two of the groups were based in Tamaki Makaurau (Auckland) and one was in Kirikiriroa (Hamilton). In the specific cases mentioned in this doctoral research, some men in the kava group knew of the infidelity of the male faikava participants. In all cases, once the infidelity was common knowledge, church leaders from within the faikava extended support to the husband and his family. When this help was accepted, the couple were able to work through their issues and reconcile their marriage. Without the consistent external help, the marriage ended in divorce. For the spouse having extra resources available especially with support from church leaders that both spouse and husband trusted, this provided a supportive foundation from which the couple were able to rebuild and move forward with the marriage. One of the milestones the couple reached that helped them to know that their marriage was

strong again, was when the husband was able to faikava, and they both knew that he could be trustworthy.

It was important for this spouse to return to faikava to enhance his spiritual, physical, mental health, and general well-being. The faikava forum provides a space for the men to experience the benefits of talk therapy while consuming kava. The men are able to talk about their thoughts, feelings, and discuss options on how this may impact their behaviour. As Vaka (2014) explains, when Pacific Island people deal with mental health issues, talanoa is a key concept and is not linear or direct like many western ideologies. The faikava environment enhances talanoa amongst the men, and tou'a if it is the right setting, and they spend many hours indirectly processing and discussing concerns. Faikava for the spouses in this research, had many benefits for the family, when implemented appropriately and in accordance with their family system values.

Chapter 4.5 The Tou'a

Clarification of the term kava group setting: Most of the participants identified three settings of KRP outside of the taumafa kava. These were Church, courtship, and kava clubs. However, within these three domains, they were deconstructed into a range of definitions for each participant. Therefore, this research does not distinguish between the layers of faikava and has deemed to classify them as kava group settings unless otherwise stated. This is to ensure that the participant's viewpoint is presented accurately and will minimise confusion as the term 'faikava' which to the participants held a variety of meanings including faikava is only termed that when it is done within the home, faikava is when you don't pay the tou'a, and so forth.

The role of the tou'a is an essential component of KRP. This section examines what it means to be a tou'a, how she became involved in the role of the tou'a, and how this impacts her. This section highlights the experiences of the tou'a and how she has navigated the positive and problematic situations she experienced. The purpose of seeking this information was to bring to the forefront the tou'a voice that has been missing from previous research.

"You know, the tou'a is a beautiful thing. But we just have to stay true to the meaning of being a Tongan tou'a." – Sela (T)

Introduction

The topic of tou'a has been an area of much interest over the past decade. As her role is now sought across a variety of settings, definition of her role may be altered and the term tou'a may be used frivolously. In this research a tou'a is referred to as the person who prepares or serves the kava. They can be male or female. In this doctoral research unless specified, when discussing the tou'a it is the tou'a fefine or female who serves the kava to the group. This chapter reports the major themes that were extracted from the data. This provides an in-depth view of what participants feel about the tou'a role especially as all participants had something to say about the tou'a. Not all the quotes from every participant are included in this chapter nevertheless, the ones that are, communicate clearly the essence of their narrative and represent several other participants viewpoints.

The main themes were.

- The Traditional Role of the Tou'a
- 'Eva
- Sit Pretty and Serve the Kava
- The Evolution of the Tou'a Role
- The Consequences from Evolving Kava Related Practices on the Tou'a
- Tou'a Vulnerability

- Sexual Objectification of the Tou'a
- Education the Key to Change
- Would You Let Your Daughter be a Tou'a?

These themes depict the view of the participants regarding the role of the tou'a and other factors surrounding the tou'a role that may impact on the participants directly or their perspective of the tou'a role.

4.5.1 The Traditional Role of the Tou'a

All participants had robust views of the tou'a. Nine out of ten participants in this research had been a tou'a at some point in their life. The participant's opinion of the traditional tou'a role was one of honour, purity, and respect. The participants shared their view of her role, expectations of that role, the environment in which she may expected to serve in her traditional capacity, and the manner in which she may carry herself in those settings. The tou'a role was revered when compared to the role "back in the day" where the tou'a was selected for her beauty, her innocence, and the respect that she held within her family and the wider community.

"And maybe my experiences would be the same as women back in the day when that was more acceptable, and it was an honour to do that. I think there is a need and there's a beauty of having men sitting there, and a beautiful Tongan woman sitting there presenting the kava." – Langi (T)

When Seini was a tou'a she was shown much respect from the women at church, people who knew her family, and members of her local community. There was esteem for the tou'a and the part she played within Tongan culture.

"I can only go by people that knew me being a tou'a. The women at church, the women I met on the road that know my mum or even the men. They had so much respect for me you know." – Seini (T)

Being able to perform the role of tou'a for Sela was making a statement to all that as a traditional tou'a, she is an obedient daughter and one that will honour her father and bring respect to her family. She felt that her family was proud of her for being able to fulfil that role.

"I'm tou'a from a young girl been born in Tonga and serve kava you know. I think it's actually the peoples value you. I think they admire you that you be able to do that. And they know you are an obedience daughter if you do that because you know like every father wants their daughter to be able to serve." – Sela (T)

As the participants shared their concept of the traditional tou'a role, they identified the role as being multifaceted. The role can be performed among many different kava groups including faikava, 'eva, kalapu, lotu, funerals, and so forth. This means the role of the tou'a is fluid in the sense that it is adaptable to the setting. The specific role the tou'a performs has fundamental belief systems that are continued across all the traditional settings. The participants who had performed the role of tou'a in a traditional setting felt it was a place where she was valued and respected, which enhanced her ability to honour her culture, and serve others.

“I feel valued when I have tou'a at home for faikava or 'eva. I feel value when I tou'a at a funeral and I ah siasi, at church eh? Because like as I said, you're there to serve. You expect people to respect you... But sometimes it's a service for me to serve. And I have to say I enjoy it.” – Sela (T)

The participants who had been a tou'a proposed the kava group setting may be a forum where they had an influential role. It was an opportunity where they felt they were able to direct conversation and express the views of Tongan women. The role of the tou'a was seen as more than just someone who serves the kava. It was suggested that the tou'a is the one who sets the tone of the kava group. She will speak how she wants to be spoken to, she is able to steer the topic of conversation and interact with the kava group in a way that some tou'a felt was helpful to the men in the group. This was a motivating factor for them to tou'a as they saw their role as somewhat of an educator as well.

“That role for a tou'a is pivotal in that sense because she can direct the conversation. ... I think it's also an opportunity for her to express the views of the Tongan woman” – Langi (T)

“I didn't feel like I could not participate. I was allowed to talk you know. So, it was with whomever was directing a question, or starting a conversation. I would be in that kind of interaction with them.” – Seini (T)

The presence of the tou'a and her manner may influence the environment and the setting in which she participates. This includes the way she dresses, the manner in which she carries herself, and the respect that she has for herself and others. This brings with it an expectation that she will be respected by those who are in the kava group. Depending on the purpose of the kava group sitting, this will dictate what the atmosphere in the group will be like. When viewed like a business it is in the sense that it is formal, and the conversation is based around topical issues and problem solving.

“When you come in as a tou’a. There’s like, when it’s like the church, you know when you got the church community, it’s kind of like it has a different atmosphere. You know, it’s more like, it’s business.” – Seini (T)

When a tou’a is serving at a kava group, she may feel it is less formal and the conversation and atmosphere may be a little more casual. If the tou’a has good self-esteem, even in a relaxed environment she will dictate how the men will respond to her presence.

“...depending on the personality of the tou’a, I think she can change the atmosphere in a kava party. Because... you know if she has high regard for herself, the way she presents herself is the way the men will react.” – Langi (T)

The way she dresses and conducts herself ideally, is the same across all kava settings. The participants express that there is a great responsibility placed on the tou’a to make sure that the men that she serves are happy, while also balancing her needs and making sure that she is happy about the interactions and conversation with the men.

“The running of the kava session it all depends on the tou’a girl. If she’s really good at doing it, then everyone will be happy. They’ll have to like the way you dress up, the way you look, the way you talk, the way, you know, you mingle with them.” – Siu (T)

The participant’s view of the tou’a role from a traditional aspect highlighted the respect, honour, and expectations that encompass her within that role. There is a reverence, and esteem for the role, the tou’a, her family, and her community. This provides a foundation for the admiration and significance of a tou’a in other aspects of KRP such as ‘eva.

4.5.2 'Eva

There was an over-all consensus that participants see faikava as a place for romance, if it is the traditional way of ‘eva. The participants shared the importance of courtship in the traditional way and how there are many factors that facilitate the opportunities for courtship. The environment and conversation are not like other settings. If romance does not eventuate, it is not as consequential as other romantic settings. The tou’a is optimistic that at least a friendship may be formed, and she will come away from the interaction with gifts!

Within the ‘eva setting, it was one of respect to the tou’a and her family. It was seen as a place of courtship with chaperones present to assess the prospective son-in-law, and for his friends to assess the potential wife.

“If you wanted to, ah someone was you know, liked a girl and wanted her hand in marriage, well you don’t actually go to there, you just go to their house, and you talk there all night with the you know the chaperones and stuff” – Lose (C)

Sometimes the tou’a was unaware that her family or others were setting her up with the opportunity to meet a young man. Nevertheless, the interaction with the prospective suitor was always respectful.

“Young men were brought in to sit next to me and I never realised they were there because you know it was an opportunity to get to know the tou’a, maybe, you know striking up a friendship, or something like that. A relationship. So, then it became a bit more respectful. and then the tone of the conversation changed” – Langi (T)

The tou’a relayed that the conversation was more respectful than some other settings and the prospective suitor would try and win the tou’a over using methods such as flirting, playing music, and bringing gifts for her. He would bring his friends with him in the hope that they can convince the tou’a to begin a courtship with their friend.

“The guys that’s interested in me, will come with his friends and the church youth group. So, they’ll come in and it’s all about them supporting this guy, to, to, what gain some, some, we used to call it gain the points. Poini heh? So, these guys all they did was they played songs and sang these love songs and stuff in the background trying to set a mood for this guy. And they would always like um they’d always bring treats.” – Seini (T)

Within the ‘eva setting there was a clear idea of what was expected of the tou’a and the kava group. With no pressure on the tou’a to respond in a certain way to the prospective or potential suitor, there are situations where the tou’a does have specific demands placed on her. When it came to other social settings, participants had varying views of what is expected of the tou’a and specifically her role. She is chosen in certain kava settings, for her beauty.

4.5.3 Sit Pretty and Serve the Kava

There was common agreement that a tou’a is often chosen because of her beauty and part of her role was to sit there and look pretty. She was physically attractive, she had skills that enabled her to entertain and humour the men. Because of this, there were fundraising opportunities made to include multiple tou’a who could charm the men with the anticipation that the more tou’a present, the more money would be raised.

“My role as a tou’a is to basically sit pretty and serve the kava.” – Seini (T)

“If you’re called on to be a tou’a you’re a physically attractive girl, you’re pretty, and you’re there you should be honoured that they that they have asked you to go and tou’a.” – Lose (C)

The presence of a beautiful tou’a who is able to serve kava, and entertain the group is likely to increase the number of attendees at the kava group. The tou’a felt her role was not only to serve the kava, but to charm the men with her beauty and wittiness.

“...back then, hardly any girls in the kava and plus I was good looking, and everybody wants to come in and look, oh look at that beautiful girl.” – ‘Alisi (C)

“To sit and look pretty, and to serve them, and to humour them, and to you know, entertain them that’s the moral of it.” – Siu (T)

When it comes to fundraising, kalapu groups utilise more than one tou’a, and was viewed as a vehicle for increasing fundraising opportunities, through accentuating the presence of a beautiful tou’a there to serve. It was reported that by having more than one tou’a, it incited rivalry between groups as to who can raise the most money. The purpose of the kalapu kava was to raise money. However, the purpose of the tou’a, was to encourage attendance.

“Nowadays they put two or three tou’a in a group, they put two or three tou’a in another group.” ... That’s how they do it but, the traditional way of doing it, it’s one circle with one group with one tou’a. You know, one tou’a. Nowadays two or three. The more tou’a, the better for the men. – Sina (S)

“Sometimes it’s a fundraising. It’s a big one where they’ll do it in a church hall and there’s heaps of tou’a there like 5. And they’ll be like competing for, you know, who’s gonna get, who’s, which groups gonna get the most money, you know, like that.” – Siu (T)

“In these big things, these big fundraisers, there’s like maybe about four or five different big groups of men drinking kava. And each group has a tou’a.” – Seini (T)

The participation of multiple physically attractive tou’a who are adept in the art of entertaining the members of the kava group, increases the chances of raising a decent amount of money. The

involvement of multiple tou'a and the use of monetary funds to pay the tou'a led the participants to believe this may no longer be under the domain of traditional KRP. They all agree that there are some traditional ceremonies with tou'a however, they felt there was an evolution of KRP and specifically the role of the tou'a.

4.5.4 The Evolution of the Tou'a Role

The research participants highlighted areas where KRP has evolved to meet the needs of those involved. One of the main areas the participants identified was the involvement of money. The money received as a tou'a was not only of benefit for themselves, but also for their extended family. As money became a motivator, some participants saw it as a lucrative side hustle with the KRP now becoming commercialised. With the introduction of paying the tou'a, participants felt the respect for the tou'a had decreased, and the tou'a was not always taking her role seriously. In some situations, she allowed other distractions such as her phone to remove her mentally from the environment. The role of the tou'a was evolving.

Most participants agreed that when money became involved, the dynamics of the kava setting was impacted directly through the interactions of the men and tou'a in the kava group, and indirectly for families of kava group participants. The direct benefits for the tou'a are money to help with her studies or immediate needs.

“... you've got students that come and ako... And a lot of the faikava, they want to help them. By come and be the tou'a and they help to give them some money for their stationery and money to help them with their living expenses.” – Sela (T)

The indirect benefits were for the family of the tou'a who received financial gain because of her receiving money as a tou'a. For Siu she made enough money from being a tou'a to take care of her own physical needs, and enough to provide for her family back in Tonga.

“The reason why I do things. It's for the money for me to survive and my family back home because they rely on me as well.” – Siu (T)

The money that was being paid out to the tou'a was believed to be a considerable amount and a way to make a decent living in Aotearoa. Some participants felt that by using the tou'a role as a means to make money, had commercialised something that was traditional, and they found this concept upsetting to them.

“...because of the evolving part of kava, the tou’a is sort of in most cases can be a lucrative side hustle. ... here in New Zealand there’s some good coin.” – Lose (C)

“...it’s pretty sad... how you’ve taken something kind of traditional, cultural and actually turned it into almost something, I don’t know, kind of commercial?” – Seini (T)

These sentiments may seem justified when we understand the motivation for why some women chose to tou’a. When Siu first went as a tou’a she did not want to be there and the only reason she went was for the money. She did not want or encourage any interaction with the men.

“Because I just went there for the money. And the men were like talking to me and I was like ‘nah don’t talk to me’. They’ll just say it right there, ‘Oh she just come for the money’. Because they expect you to be like um, oh it’s not about the money It’s about them. To put them first before money. But then you know, behind it, money is the number one thing that I came there for.” – Siu (T)

With some KRP veering away from traditional settings and kava becoming a global commodity, some participants felt the role of the tou’a was evolving in a negative way. The respect for the role of the tou’a was declining. As the environment and motivation for kava consumption has altered or evolved from the past, so has the attitudes of the kava group participants. As done traditionally, whoever is in charge will dictate kava group protocols and what that will entail. This ultimately means that the person in charge is the one that will dictate how the interactions with the tou’a may play out. Therefore, some kava groups may allow or condone disrespectful behaviour towards the tou’a to take place within their kava group setting.

I think that’s because it’s just um time change a lot of things in the culture. It’s no longer with respect as how it used to be before. And now it’s just up to whoever’s running the kava session. They do their own cultural thing in it” – Siu (T)

Where nowadays, the people who drink kava, don’t even respect tou’a.” – ‘Alisi (C)

The consumption and use of kava is one of the many things evolving around kava groups. With technology accessible to most of the population of Aotearoa, it is understandable that this also presenting in the kava group space. Some feel the tou’a is not taking her role seriously and it is evident when they text or play on their phone while they are meant to be tou’a. The lack of

importance given to the tou'a role seeps into the kava group environment which is then streamed live to viewers via technology.

“I watch some of the tou'a and they sit there and they text. And they even live what they doing it and I, I saw, the difference now.” – Sela (T)

If the tou'a is on her phone, then the men are not feeling they are valued or getting their money's worth from the tou'a. They in turn may act disrespectfully to her and believe she is there only for the money and is not concerned about her role as the tou'a. As the men feel the tou'a is there and motivated by the money they pay her, they may take advantage of that situation and no longer act respectfully towards the tou'a. There were many other comments about how the participants feel the role of the tou'a has evolved with money being only one aspect. Nevertheless, it is the consequences or impact of the evolving tou'a role that has been emphasised through the talanoa with participants.

4.5.5 The Consequences of Evolving Kava Related Practices on the Tou'a

With a lot of the negative actions of the kava group participants and the tou'a being played out on social media, the role of the tou'a has become tarnished and participants would say it no longer holds that respect that it used to, unless it is performed in a traditional setting. The tou'a role for many is seen as a 'side hustle' for money. It has a negative connotation that some see as having an adverse impact on Tongan women. Tou'a are becoming considered of low status within the Tongan community. This may pose conflicting ideals for the tou'a as she is forced to choose between her degraded status in the community as a tou'a, compared with the need to provide an income for her and her family.

“I believe that the tou'a is bringing our status or you know lack of better words but it's like bringing our being of a woman down. As a Tongan woman you know.” – Lose (C)

“If you go tou'a, and you don't have a job, you are like low in the community. You know, they kinda look down at, on you.” Siu (T)

With the knowledge that the tou'a are considered of low standing in the Tongan community, the women who tou'a must consider the social consequences of the decision to be a tou'a. The seduction with money especially when financial prospects are lacking, make this decision a viable option for cash-strapped Tongan women. The value of providing a much-needed income versus low standing in one's community is one of the many challenges tou'a face today.

“If that’s a side hustle yep you, do it, but I, for many I just wish women that were going in to tou’a would think it a little more carefully about what tou’a means to them as a Tongan woman.” – Lose (C)

As the tou’a considers her options and the challenges that her choices may bring, she has to weigh up the consequences between the necessity to earn money and the degraded status in her community. This can bring about feelings of isolation and vulnerability.

4.5.6 Tou’a Vulnerability

With this need for income, as Tongan women all the participants felt that the tou’a is placed in a vulnerable position when she is fulfilling the tou’a role in a non-traditional setting. Tou’a may make connections with men who sweet talk them, and the men pursue them when they are lacking in some area, they feel the tou’a may fulfil. This shifts the relationship from platonic to romantic which may include infidelity on the man’s part. The flirting and banter in the group can lead to a tou’a being treated like a joke which may see her become mentally fragile as she takes on board the negative remarks aimed at her. Some tou’a will ignore this inappropriate behaviour as she feels she has no choice as an illegal immigrant but to accept the abuse she is faced with. Some participants felt that the tou’a may encourage the relationship especially if she is an overstayer so that she may connect with a man who will marry her, and she will get residency in Aotearoa.

The kava group setting may be a catalyst in linking a young vulnerable tou’a with an opportunity to connect with a man who may be able to provide for her a better life than the one they have. The desire for freedom from dearth of money may lead to inappropriate liaisons and relationships between tou’a and members of the kava group.

“The more you get to know somebody, the more you get sweet talked, they’ve been given money, even what they want because they can’t, and they fall for those people. And those people use them and abuse them at the same time. It’s so sad.” – Alisi (C)

The relationship between the tou’a and a member of the kava group is something that is developed over time. If the kava group use the same tou’a regularly, then she will develop bonds with the men in the group as they become more acquainted with one another. Sela suggests that these bonds may shift from platonic to romantic when there is something unfulfilled within the man’s life that leads him to want to explore a relationship outside of his marriage.

“...it’s a relationship. It’s done over time. It’s like the tou’a is in a vulnerable situation. And somehow there are gaps there. You know there is, maybe they have that you know sexual desire that is fulfilment by only just some flirt type, and they entertain that idea. I basically don’t think it’s really on the tou’a. Because as a woman you are really vulnerable yourself you know.” – Sela (T)

In the beginning it may be a little flirting, but as the connection between tou’a and the kava group men changes, the banter and flirting may become inappropriate, and the kava space may no longer be a safe place for the tou’a. The participants believed that it starts with the disrespect and demeaning of her status within that kava group and therefore may have a negative impact on her mental health and wellbeing. If the tou’a is viewed as a ‘joke’, they may find amusement by making fun of her and putting her down to get a laugh.

*“It’s the kind of language they approach the tou’a. When they sit down, they call them anything that comes in their head. ...when they approach a tou’a its more, it’s to them it’s fun, it’s the way they jokes. By putting that person down.”
– Alisi (C)*

The tou’a is not immune to the negativity that is encompassing her in that environment. The harm may not be obvious initially nevertheless, the impact of putting down and making fun of the tou’a will take a toll on her. This attitude is reflected on the tou’a, and she will take this negativity with her when she leaves the kava group setting.

*“But nowadays it’s kava drinking and being a tou’a, both is harmful. Harmful physically, harmful you know mentally, and for the wellbeing of the person. And whoever that person comes in contact with. Whatever she takes from being a tou’a. Being affected by the tou’a experience, she takes with her, everywhere she goes. And you know, people will hear about it, whether they like to or not.”
– Langi (T)*

Several participants shared the plight of illegal immigrants who are unable to seek employment legally and are encouraged or pressured by family to obtain an income by being a tou’a. Despite the kava group environment being unhealthy for her in many ways, she may feel she has no choice but to go back to the kava group for the income.

“Because of that kind of attitude. Because people think you go tou’a, and a lot of the young ones that go tou’a especially here, overstayers, and people. Mostly the tou’a here are overstayers.” – Alisi (C)

This was a concern for the participants and felt the young tou'a were vulnerable at the kava group and also in the transporting of her to and from the kava group. If the same person is offering to pick up the tou'a it would be natural to develop a connection. However, this could be dangerous for a tou'a who is away from her family and feeling emotionally fragile.

"...someone in the community who is reliable to go pick the tou'a up and they end up having an affair. Because you know how the tou'a are fragile? Like the overstayer? And they needed some comfort."- Alisi (C)

On the other hand, a few participants from all the categories did not view the tou'a as innocent or fragile. They felt that when a tou'a is an overstayer and needs money to survive, and she also wants to live permanently in Aotearoa. She may take any opportunity that arises to connect with a kava group member in the hope that she will marry and gain her residency.

"Some girl they want to get the resident here in New Zealand. OK. And I think that some girl like her she want to use my husband, to give money to her. And some girl they want a resident here in New Zealand io, something like that." – Vina (S)

The kava group setting has been the vehicle for the development of inappropriate liaisons between vulnerable tou'a and men of the kava group. As the tou'a is sweet talked and pursued, she may be susceptible to the endearing talk of the man. Nevertheless, the reality is, in a minority of kava groups, they are treating the tou'a as a joke and showing nil respect for her. The tou'a despite being fragile as she takes on the negative comments and actions of the men in the group, she may seek a connection that will enable her to meet someone that can give her residency in Aotearoa. As the relationships within the kava group evolve, so does the way the role of the tou'a is viewed.

4.5.7 Sexual Objectification of the Tou'a

The values of the tou'a in many settings of KRP are evolving. Fundamental traditional protocols are no longer being upheld in a minority of kava groups and the kava group is evolving to accept inappropriate behaviour of those present. Relationships being formed with vulnerable tou'a, married women are choosing to tou'a, there is a decline in morals, and the tou'a is being seduced by the lure of money. Most of the participants agreed that flirting within the kava circle is an expectation as it was here that traditionally courting was encouraged and there was hope that the tou'a may meet someone special. However, traditionally the tou'a was unmarried and so were the men attempting to court her. All participants agreed that the evolving kava environment pertaining to flirting with the tou'a has changed and become destructive to families.

“tou’a was first introduced as a way of um, Tongan ways of men courting the women. So, flirt is supposed to be there. But when you bring it to nowadays, to the kava session nowadays, to flirt during the kava session, it’s really wrong you know because most of the mens are, married men. And many marriages has been broken through that, you know broken families have been the cost of tou’a flirting with the mens during the kava session.” – Siu (T)

There is an expectation from some tou’a and the men that the tou’a role is to serve and give pleasure to the men. With the evolution of KRP, it is becoming apparent that no longer is the flirting innocent banter with a hope of connecting with the tou’a romantically. The flirting is less discrete and deemed by participants to be downright rude. Nevertheless, it is having an impact on the tou’a and within this environment relationships between tou’a and men in the kava group are developing.

But like those old days of how they respect the tou’a. You know if they see a tou’a there, they highly respect the tou’a but, nowadays they misusing it of having a tou’a there. They think they do the flirting, do the other things to the tou’a.” – Sina (S)

You know we’re there for pleasure. To give pleasure to men and to be talked at where there are more than often is not respectful. You know flirting is rude and quite often that’s how married men take off with the tou’a.” – Lose (C)

When a tou’a is seen as a sexual object and one to flirt with, it appears that the kava group participants allow the tou’a to be disrespected and treated this way. Some say the conversation is ‘vulgar’, and the tou’a is somewhat put ‘on display’ and will dance while the men clap. Participants see this as a contributing factor to the sexualisation of the kava. The tou’a becomes an object to lust after.

“I have heard a lot of these Tou’a they just get in with the men, stare at them, vulgar conversations. And that’s what the atmosphere is like. It’s a vulgar situation.” – Langi (T)

placed in there to you know, to be looked at, it just contributes to the sexualising of the kava. You know, where we’re there for ah the pleasure to look at, you know for men to seduce, for men to lust after. You know that’s that those underpinning things are behind the tou’a.” – Lose (C)

When the tou’a is seen to respond to the men in a way that the men like, then the sexualisation of the tou’a role is perpetuated by all who are there. The respect for the tou’a and her role is no longer there. The tou’a is not just sitting there serving the kava, she is actively involved with the men in an inappropriate way.

“It’s the respect gone out of it, ... it’s ridiculous you’ve got men sitting there clapping and the tou’a is dancing for them? As soon as the poor girl gets up and starts doing that, that’s when you know it’s gone. It’s lost, the respect is not there at all you know. So, what a big change when I see things like that.” – Seini (T)

All the tou’a and some of the other participants made statements about the physical touching that is aimed at the tou’a during the kava session. This is where flirting is no longer a vocal expression, it is now being expressed physically. Some tou’a are ok with this, but other participants felt it was inappropriate and uncomfortable.

“Yeah, they were like it would be just little things like they would be talking, and they would you know try and hold my hand at first it was like they’d put their hand over my hand. And I’d be sitting there trying like you know not to touch me. And it got to the stage where one of them put their hand on my knee, and I pinched him so hard that he never did it again” – Langi (T)

“they’ll flirt with you like you know, or they’ll hit your bum when you get up to go to the bathroom or go out and have a break or smoke. It’s really weird, really annoying.” – Siu (T)

Many of the participants believed that the behaviour of the men is somewhat distorted as they are drunk. They think that when the men consume kava, it makes them act similar to someone who has drunk alcohol, and they become less capable of making good decisions. In this relaxed state, the lines become blurred of what is appropriate behaviour with the tou’a and some of the men who consume kava will touch, flirt, and sexually objectify the tou’a.

“Yep. I think it is drunk like alcohol. Because that’s when they’re their thinking is not right cos if they’re relaxing, they know what they doing. But drunk, that’s when they do crazy stuff. Like for example, they do they stand up and hulahula with the tou’a and that’s when they rub the body of the tou’a and everything. That’s when they flirting with the tou’a. They’re not thinking right because they’re drunk!” – Sina (S)

Participants were also aware that there were multiple factors that played into why the tou’a may accept disrespectful behaviour and may even reciprocate it. This was stated mainly from the viewpoint that this was not ‘eva, and the tou’a involved were not sexually naïve. The men know that there is a reason the tou’a needs to be doing that work, and therefore take advantage of her situation. The women believe the men who know that the tou’a is not single, will disrespect her because she has been sexually active and is experienced in that area.

“They don’t care about whether you’re married, not married, they just want a woman sitting there, to serve the kava and then. The scary part is that these guys know that they’re married women, or they’re not single, and then it’s like they take advantage of the situation... if you’re gonna be a married woman, or a woman that’s not a virgin, but you’re trying to act like it. Then they’re gonna treat you like you’re not you know. It’s kind of like a whore?? kind of thing which is terrible” – Seini (T)

Financial implications and issues have led to more married women or sole parents performing the role of tou’a. This has impacted on the environment in which the tou’a now serves. There is a belief that with more sexually active tou’a being solicited to serve the kava groups, the standard of the men’s behaviour has deteriorated, and the way the tou’a view their role has changed from traditional and respectful to a lucrative hustle. Some feel the tou’a no longer respects her role and will dress to impress the men in the group.

“What changed was the way that men behaved. Men the way they treated woman... A tou’a back then, was only for girls that were innocent and single. That was it. And then, I don’t know who the first person it was, that was married, like you know that became a tou’a. And, and then it started from there, ...because you’re not pure. You’ve been used you know. So, they play with that and, ...change in the way men um have decided you know, you’re used, therefore it’s not the same.” – Seini (T)

“But I know um within the faikava you know, even at church when you go past you can see how people look so horny when they sit beside the tou’a. And I think that wasn’t the purpose yeah, but at the same time the tou’a. The way they dress oh my gosh. You know, the low cut it just feels like their boobs gonna come out. You like, just exposing yourself to say, ‘yeah come and touch me’. It’s different when you go to the nightclub then when you come tou’a in the kava.” Sela (T)

With the lowering of morals, honesty, and values within some kava group setting, participants felt that the atmosphere was rife with opportunities for the tou’a and members of the kava group to develop relationships regardless of marital status. There was concern that the men would form a connection with the tou’a and profess to be single when he is still married.

“When you go tou’a, that’s when married men come in and say, ‘oh I’m already divorced, I’ve got problems with my wife, I’m still single’ and everything. And that’s when you say ‘ok’, then you start to build a relationship with that person. But at the end you find out he’s already that he still have a family,” – Sina (S)

With regular interactions between tou’a and kava groups we understand the connections will form and can be healthy for all. However, we see in this research that not all these relationships are healthy or

appropriate. Some men will try and weaken the tou'a resistance through persistently trying to flirt with her and seduce her with money. Depending on the tou'a state of mind, this will determine the outcome of these advances. If money is exchanged, a young tou'a may feel obligated to give back to the man.

“But guys will keep trying until they have the opportunities, see the window of opportunity. ...And sometimes it's different because like, it's the level of mentality you have to consider the tou'a's stage of mind. They may stay in a home where they are not welcome, or not well looked after then they find this person in the kalapu who is so caring who give them money to take care of everything. You know when they provide that support to them, of course you feel obligated to give back and usually that is where sexual harassment comes in.” - Sela (T)

When the talanoa with participants had been completed, the researcher received a message from one of the participants regarding the use of a prostitute to take the role of the tou'a. This video that was circulated was confirmed by other sources as well. It is important to note that this was NOT a Tongan kava group. Part of KRP evolving is the consumption of kava across a broad range of settings with kava consumers having little or no knowledge of the KRP in a traditional setting including the value of a tou'a.

“See I told you I was right about it. Kava Tonga is now becoming the new prostitution version. Last week, a hooker/prostitute was paid online to serve kava at a specific club and end up performing oral sex with some of the men in that kava session. How disgusting! That is what happens when Tongan girls refuse to serve kava because of such behaviour, the men in the kava will turn to online prostitution.” ...” I saw it with my own two eyes the video showed by men in the kava” – Siu (T)

What is noteworthy here is that the Tongan girls who tou'a refused to serve in this setting. Some groups have a reputation for being disreputable and not a safe place for tou'a. It can be a dangerous situation if a young girl is unaware of these groups expectations and innocently turns up to tou'a. As we have seen from the participants, the tou'a role is somewhat becoming disconnected from the traditional fundamentals upon which its original values were upheld. Flirting, conversations, the behaviour of the kava group, the behaviour of the tou'a, and the inappropriate relationships that are developing are perpetuating an environment that is not aligned with the values of traditional KRP. If there is a genuine desire to incorporate the traditional with the modern, then education may be the key to change.

4.5.8 Education the Key to Change

Educating those involved in KRP was believed to be the key to making some positive changes with KRP. It is important to note that these issues that have been highlighted in this doctoral research are not found amongst that majority of kava groups. Nevertheless, it is important that we do not minimise the harm that is being caused by kava groups that are operating in ways that are harmful to tou'a, the men of the group, and their families.

Some participants felt strongly that it is necessary to establish protocols to protect the tou'a, some form of support system for the tou'a victim of sexual assault would be beneficial. Providing education for the men around the way they interact with the tou'a would be a way to mitigate any forms of sexual abuse and inappropriate sexual relations. The participants felt it was necessary for the person transporting the tou'a to be a chaperone for the tou'a who is there to support the tou'a and advocate for her if needed. This would include not allowing any form of sexual content in the interaction with the tou'a at any time. This may lessen chances of inappropriate liaisons to develop.

“So probably when she goes tou'a always go with a chaperone, a supervisor. So, you should pick the people that they already been picked” – Alisi (C)

“What really happen is like there should be a protective way of who we send to tou'a to their own home. Is open some will come, because you got asked to come. When you go back, because that vulnerability, you put that tou'a as a female then anything can happen. You know any sexual abuse can happen at that time. I think what we needed to do is have some safety protective to be able to protect the tou'a not to have an affair with a married man during the faikava.” – Sela (T)

It is also strongly suggested that the community do not support the victim of abuse in kava groups. It is advised that there needs to be some form of support provided to these abuse victims to help them work through the trauma of sexual abuse. It is stated that too often the victim is shamed and gossiped about, and her voice suppressed.

“I found as a woman, we don't have enough support to be able, to support the person you know, the victim. Because a lot of the time we just blame them. And I think that's really actually happen in the Tongan community. We actually should think of how to protect our own women. Instead of us lau in lau'i (talk about others/gossip).” - Sela (T)

Recommendations from the participants were that there needs to be some education around how the men interact with the tou'a. Some participants have actively been trying to implement some education

with the men. ‘Alisi has been discussing with the men that when they have a tou’a they should think of her as their daughter and treat her accordingly. This includes creating an environment they would be comfortable with their daughter to be in.

“I’ve been trying to educate our men, that what they do to the tou’a, treat them as like their own daughter. Treat them with respect and the kind of jokes, conversation they give them, make, make it more fun. In a funny way. Socialising more sociable.”
– ‘Alisi (C)

Providing some form of education, support, and putting protective measures in place for the tou’a would be beneficial in mitigating possible harm that may come to the tou’a. Finding a way to shift the mindset of the men would encourage an environment for the tou’a where she is less likely to be taken advantage of. The participants were cautious around how safe a tou’a is, and this was evident when they were asked if they had a daughter, would they allow her to participate as a tou’a.

4.5.9 Would You Let Your Daughter Be a Tou’a?

The responses to this question were quite diverse and some participants were very strong in their views. The majority were adamant they would not want their daughter to tou’a because of the involvement of that role in a non-traditional setting. They were concerned that the negative aspects of the non-traditional kava groups would seep into the other groups and there was no current system to vet kava groups. There was the belief that it would be unsafe and, that their daughter may not be able to handle banter. Assent was given from those if it was in a traditional setting.

“There are those who don’t wanna go tou’a, because they’re too weak to handle all those sexual um jokes.” – ‘Alisi (C)

“I don’t think she’s mature enough or be able to handle the conversation in the kalapu.” – Sela (T)

Some participants had daughters who were aware of the tou’a role and were adamant they would not be involved with KRP in any form. Especially if they had seen issues between their parents over KRP. Some participants were concerned with their daughter’s ability to handle the flirting and inuendo’s that the men may make. They felt their daughters may not be mature enough.

Nah! And they don't like it.” – Nisi (S)

No! I would never, I swear I would never wish it upon them.” – Siu (T)

I don't think it's safe for your daughters to go out there tou'a.” – Sina (S)

“It went from all this positive stuff, respectable stuff, to no! I don't want a daughter doing that!” – Seini (T)

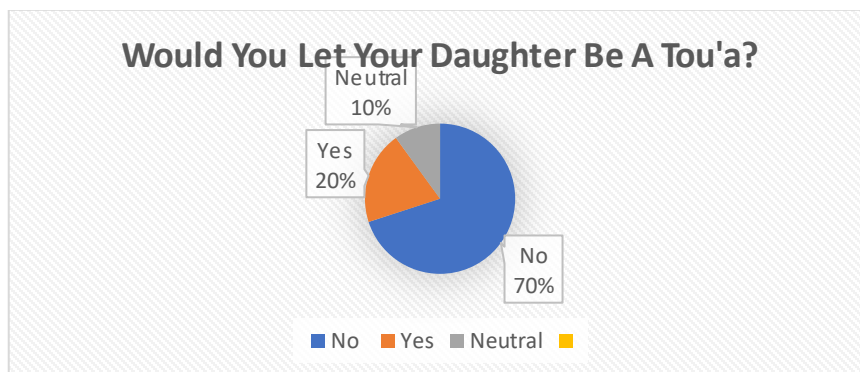
A couple of the participants found value in their daughter being a tou'a if it is in a traditional setting. They would support her if it was something she wanted to do and if it provided an opportunity for her to share her perspective. This may be in a university setting where she can use her role as tou'a to speak on a subject important to her to a group of people while consuming kava.

“Yes, if its cultural. If it has to do with the community or anything in a cultural sense. If it's an opportunity for her to um to, to have a platform to speak to certain people.” Langi (T)

As you can see in Figure 4, out of the 10 participants, the 70% majority of participants said “NO” to their daughters being tou'a. Of those 20% that said “YES”, there were conditions attached with that including it only being in a traditional or vetted safe setting. The neutral participant again would only consider it if there were safety protocols in place. This response identifies the fear that the participants have over the safety of the tou'a both physically and mentally. Being a tou'a is not as straightforward as one might think.

Figure 3

Would You Let Your Daughter Be a Tou'a?



4.5.10 Summary

The role of the tou'a is challenging regardless of the setting. Whether it be traditional or an evolved version of KRP, there are expectations of the tou'a regarding her behaviour, her appearance, and her motive for being a tou'a. In conclusion, the participants' narratives have provided valuable insights into their experiences and perspectives regarding the role of the tou'a. Thematic analysis has enabled us to identify key themes that reflect the areas participants felt compelled to share their opinions on. While not all participant quotes are included in this chapter, the selected quotes effectively convey the collective voice and experiences of the participants. It is a concern to note that there is disapproval within the community towards girls who assume the role of tou'a, and that one of our participants experienced a negative response after being sexually assaulted. These incidents have had a profound impact, leading to a lack of willingness among 70% of the participants to allow their daughters to become tou'a. These findings shed light on the complex dynamics and challenges surrounding the tou'a role, highlighting the need for further discussions and interventions to address these issues within the Tongan community.

4.5.11 Discussion

The findings from this research provide hearty information as 90% of participants have been a tou'a at some point. When it comes to the role of the tou'a, it can be likened to the geisha of Japan. In fact, there is a Facebook page *Memoirs of a Tongan Geisha aka Tou'a* (2012). Arcia Tecun (2019) referred to observations he had made while participating in KRP of tou'a being compared with the geisha. Both are roles that when aligned with tradition, are what many young women aspire to be. It is a role that is conducted with poise and grace, and encompasses the beauty of the culture, its values, and its allegiance to traditional belief systems. However, both the geisha and the tou'a roles have been somewhat misrepresented when they are performed with little alignment or adherence to the cultural structure it was built on.

- The traditional role of the tou'a

As all the participants confirmed, the traditional role of the tou'a was seen as one that commanded respect and signified the importance of a special occasion. There were various settings in which a tou'a may be called upon to serve the kava. These may include church settings, kalapu, special occasions, and significant life events. The protocols for the tou'a in each setting are different and dependent upon who is organising it (Arcia Tecun, 2021). When the organisers are wanting to adhere to the traditional protocols, this will be reinforced through the tou'a role and the part that she plays in that setting.

According to the participants, in a traditional setting there are certain protocols followed that begin before the tou'a is even selected. The organiser of the event will identify the characteristics of the

tou'a that they need. This will include her position within the community, her family heritage, her sexual purity, and her appearance. Depending on the setting, she may be selected because of her intellect or knowledge in a certain area. Once a tou'a is selected, she will be tutored in the role that she will perform. This will include protocols around how she will sit with her legs to the side to indicate she has not had children and is still a virgin, her clothing will consist of a nice dress, tupenu, and ta'ovala, and her demeanour will be one of poise and grace. She will be skilled in ways to converse with the participants when invited to, and know when to serve, smile, and look pretty. The participants who have been tou'a all agree that there is an art to being a tou'a and one that takes skill to develop. The participants believe that when the tou'a is chosen under these conditions, it is an honour and commands respect from the organisers, kava group participants, and the wider community. As the tou'a takes her place behind the kumete (kava bowl), there was an expectation that she would fulfil her tou'a role to serve the kava whilst conversing with the men in the kava group (Taufa, 2014 p. 95).

Another traditional role the participants mentioned was 'eva. *'Faikava 'eva was a traditional method of courting where it involves a kava party for young men seeking the permission of the parents of a tou'a or a young girl to mix and serve the kava for them for the night'* (Fehoko, 2014, p. 89).

According to astronomer Tēvita Fale, the young girl has the upper hand when the young man comes to court her in her own home as she can pick which suitor she wants (Arcia Tecun, 2021). In Taufa (2014) her study states that when a young woman was approached to tou'a in the faikava 'eva setting it was a sign of respect for the young lady and her family (p. 173). This facet of faikava is slowly dying out as young men are choosing to court the girls in a different manner. Arcia Tecun (2021) conveys that 'eva still happens but not as often as it is easier to ask a girl to go to the movies or a dance and the girl feels it is easier too than serving the kava. Fehoko (2014) suggests that as young Tongan women are exposed to societal influences and utilise other social setting such as night clubs to find a potential partner, then traditional forms of courtship will become non-existent. One of the participants who is now in her 30's still feels that it is appropriate to 'eva and would only consider courting someone if he presented to her home to faikava with the intention of courting her.

- The evolution of the tou'a role

It is evident throughout this research that the participants view on the tou'a role identify that it has evolved to meet the needs of the societal demands and the influence of western belief systems. For example, the tou'a fefine was a role that was an integral part of the faikava and 'eva ceremonies. It was valued and therefore the role of the tou'a was one of respect and honour. Nevertheless, the participants have shared that this role has evolved to meet the needs of the demands of those involved in KRP. This is multifaceted from the need of financial gain from the tou'a, to the demands of the

kava group participants to access services of a tou'a and dictate the role that she will play in accordance with what the kava group agree on.

The researcher has had numerous discussions on the role of tou'a, and it has been consistently raised by members of the community, if money becomes a commodity in the faikava setting, is the role of the tou'a still aligned with tradition and the belief systems that encompass this or has the monetisation of the role taken it away from tradition. Futa Helu raised this question when he stated, '*How the kalapu is going to change the other forms of kava it is too early yet to tell but it is symptomatic of the situation that money has already established itself well in the one institution that is most characteristic of Tongan culture*' (Helu, 1993, p. 190).

For some participants who had been tou'a, the only reason they agreed to tou'a was because of the financial gain aspect of it. For one it would pay for her studies and for another it would provide the necessities of life, and for her family back in Tonga. As stated, being a tou'a can provide a lucrative side hustle for a young woman who is limited in her work opportunities, especially if she is residing in Aotearoa illegally. There is pressure put on her by the extended family to contribute financially to the family and despite some of the tou'a resisting initially, eventually the participants in this research who experienced this succumbed to the demands of the family. Arcia Tecun (2019) reports that the need for tou'a to earn money is complicated by the lack of job opportunities to earn money in other ways.

As we explore more the term lucrative, we understand that it means profitable. During the talanoa participants shared how much money they earned in different settings. When they were the beneficiary of a fundraising event, one participant received \$3,000 and another received well over \$1000. For a young woman with no income, this is a huge financial gain for only a few hours work. However, there are tou'a who will take advantage of this generosity. One tou'a shared how she would sometimes make up stories about the death of a loved one, or the need of extra money to feed her family. The men would then contribute more generously to the tou'a during the kava group. If this is done across a variety of the groups that she is tou'a for, she can earn approximately \$3000 over a weekend. This is not the norm and is not done regularly. It is only done when she needs extra money. A tou'a shared that when it rains, she has more opportunities to tou'a and can be in high demand during the day as men who work in labouring jobs get rained off. Instead of going home they call a tou'a to come and serve kava for them. On average a tou'a who is good at what she does can earn \$200 - \$300 per sitting. If she works 8 hours and is paid an average of \$250, she will earn \$31.25 per hour which is higher than that minimum wage and higher than a lot of other hourly rates. For some tou'a, this may be a good gauge of how much they should be getting paid.

It is understandable why tou'a would see their role as a way to earn money. It is a regular income for some of them, and looking at the amount being paid, she is less likely to earn that kind of money if she has no work experience or formal education. It is common knowledge to that if she catches the

eye of one of the men in the group, it is more likely that he will contribute even more generously. There was concern thought that when a specific member of the group is spending more money on the tou'a, some felt that this was a way of making her feel some form of obligation to him. If a tou'a is confident and has good self-worth, she will be able to accept the gift and feel no obligation to him. This form of manipulation is not healthy if the intention is to force some form of unwanted reciprocity from the tou'a. This may lead to negative consequences whether directly or indirectly on the tou'a.

- The consequences of the evolution of KRP regarding the tou'a

The role of the tou'a outside of tradition has evolved to become something that is no longer characteristic of the traditions of the tou'a role within the Tongan culture. When money is the focal point of the tou'a and her reason for being involved in KRP, she herself does not view her role as a traditional tou'a and she will put up with the '*laupisi*' (nonsense) that may go on in a particular kava group, if she is rewarded with a good amount of money. The researcher was asked by a member of the community if this would mean the tou'a should be called a tou'a, or should she be considered more like a barmaid who is going to work and serving the men kava across a table instead of alcohol across a bar. The tou'a who were solicited to tou'a based on a financial transaction, acknowledged that their treatment within the kava environment was disrespectful. They were constantly sexually objectified, and they believed the men felt that it was acceptable for them to treat the tou'a this way as she was being paid for her services. The tou'a believed the men felt they could do and say what they wanted to the tou'a because this was a paid service, and they were her employer. From what some of the tou'a reported, if these men were her employers, they were not very good bosses. They treated the tou'a like she was not worth much especially if they knew that she was desperate for money.

According to Arcia Tecun (2019), when men pay for the services of the tou'a, some feel they have the right to say speak to the tou'a however they want because she is paid to '*put up with it*' (p. 185). If the tou'a was a known overstayer, this could be used against her to manipulate her, or she would not get paid much. Fehoko (2014) states that the men enjoy flirting with the tou'a however, this can become excessive, and may '*lead to severe problems such as sexual harassment*' (p.67). This condescending attitude seeped into the community where members of the Tongan community who knew these women were tou'a, would show little respect for them. Some tou'a felt it necessary to hide their identity and live two separate lives to maintain some dignity in the community. Some women in the community feel the tou'a is responsible for the way she is spoken to because she does not object to the men in the kava groups vulgar behaviour (Taufa, 2014). The tou'a has been likened to a prostitute because she is paid for her role which includes engaging in sexualised conversation and innuendos (Arcia Tecun, 2019).

- Sexual Objectification of the tou'a

Arcia Tecun (2019) advises that within KRP there is evidence of sexual desire when a tou'a is present influenced by '*changing aesthetics of beauty, sexuality, and notions of modesty*' and the '*changed relationship to erotic power and women's positions within paradigms of western modernity*' (p. 195). As Taufu (2014) acknowledges, tou'a are selected because of their '*sexual desirability*' (p. 37). When men make crude and vulgar remarks to the tou'a, because she does not rebuke these comments there seems to be a belief that she is ok with the way she is spoken to. However, we must remember that she is being paid and participants have identified that as a tou'a they are vulnerable especially when they rely on the income of the men in the kava group. If they rebuke the vulgarity, they may not be asked to tou'a again. These paid to serve tou'a experienced abuse in many forms.

During the researcher's kava journey over several years, there has been chatter in the community about sexual abuse and tou'a being taken advantage of because they have no form of income and rely on the KRPs to support themselves and their family. This has led to some tou'a being in harrowing situations. When the researcher began this journey, there was a lot of talk that tou'a had experienced sexual harassment in the kava setting. However, there were some serious allegations and concerns raised in the community regarding serious sexual assaults on tou'a including rape. This research would not include this topic if it had not been the personal experience of one of the tou'a. The purpose of qualitative research is to bring out the voice of the participant (Chandler, Anstey, & Ross, 2015). Many participants were able to share the stories of others who had experienced abuse in some form. Nevertheless, they were not their own personal experiences. I battled with this myself. However, in the beginning of my PhD journey I was told that this is not my story to tell. It is the participant's story and this participant wanted to share her story and experience so that if there are other tou'a out there who have experienced something similar, then they do not need to go through this alone. That they should speak up and not be oppressed by others. As a Tongan woman, and tou'a, she should be respected for her role that she plays in KRP. The following is a personal experience of one of the participants that highlights the dark side of KRP. Some identifying information has been left out intentionally to protect the identity of the participant. **With this participant's personal experience, we must acknowledge that there are kava groups or men attending these groups that take advantage of vulnerable tou'a. However, these are the minority! Most kava groups operating in Aotearoa do not use a tou'a fefine, and those that do, align themselves with some variance of traditional adherence and structure.**

WARNING: This personal experience contains sexual themes and content that may be disturbing for some readers.

Participant X is a sole parent who arrived in Aotearoa from Tonga several years ago with the intent to earn money and send it back home to her family. Upon arriving in Aotearoa, she was unable to find work and eventually became an illegal immigrant. With much trepidation she agreed to tou'a. This became her main source of income and enabled her to live independently in Aotearoa while supporting her family in Tonga. However, because money was the motivator for her to tou'a, she was put in settings that increased her feelings of vulnerability. The banter in the group was sexualised nevertheless participant X said she was able to curb it and at times give back as good as she got. Frequently the kava group participants would offer her large amounts of cash (\$500+) to let them take her home with the intention that she perform sexual acts with them. This she declined. One night when one of the men insisted on taking her home, she accepted because there was another man from the group going also. Participant X became slightly nervous when he dropped the other man off and then took a detour to an industrial part of town. He then threatened her that if she did not do what he said that he would call the police and have them deport her for being an overstayer. Participant X knew her rights nonetheless she felt scared about what he was going to do to her. In her state of fear and feeling that he might kill her, Participant X froze and was raped. Afterwards Participant X was devastated and distraught when she went home but with the support of family, she able to report the incident to the Police and they laid charges against the man. The next week Participant X had to put aside her fear and shame to return to the kava group and act as if nothing had happened so that she could continue to earn the much-needed income. Her experience became gossip for others and pressure was put on her to drop the charges. She was treated as if she was the person in the wrong. Nevertheless, she continued to serve the kava groups and face her perpetrator each week despite the negative impact it was having on her mental health and well-being”.

The experience of this participant is traumatic and has had a huge impact on the life of the participant. Research from Taufa (2014) and Arcia Tecun (2019) have both commented on the deterioration of the tou'a role and therefore, including this participant's experience has allowed evidence to come forth of the reality that is experienced by some tou'a. This research was undertaken to provide the experiences of the tou'a regardless of whether it was positive or negative. It is to provide the truth, and the lived experience of those who serve in the tou'a role. By providing this participant's experience, this doctoral research has given voice to the tou'a in a way that has not previously been recorded in research studies. It identifies how KRP are evolving due to the pressures of navigating a modernised Tongan culture in Aotearoa and the monetisation of the tou'a role. Helu (1993) raised the point that a significant sign of the evolution of KRP is the monetisation of kalapu kava. Helu's concern was how this would influence other aspects of kava. As we can see from the participants, the money aspect of KRP has had a powerful impact on KRP that has been used to benefit others, and in some circumstances, to manipulate tou'a. Experiencing the māfana, the warmth of being heard and empowered, the participant felt a sense of liberation in sharing her story without any limitations or

judgments. The desire to share her experience was empowering for her, as she participated in the collective creation of knowledge and embraced the potential for fostering change within her community. This process was both challenging and beautiful, providing an opportunity for personal growth and transformation.

- Education the key to change

Education is the act of giving and receiving knowledge. Some participants felt strongly that there was a lack of education in the community regarding the tou'a role and the way in which protocols could be implemented to minimise harm to her. It was suggested by participants that the men in the kava group should treat the tou'a like their own daughter. Treat her with respect and control their conversation and jokes to be funny and not lewd. If the men understand the role of the tou'a and the honourable role that it is, then maybe they will approach the tou'a in a way that will be respectful. Another aspect suggested for education was the tou'a herself. As suggested previously, the tou'a would be educated on her role, the way she presents herself, she would develop skills around dealing with unwanted advances by members of the kava group and gain an understanding of her worth and value as a tou'a.

A suggestion made by the participants was that the members of the community could support the tou'a more through providing wraparound support services for when problems or issues may arise. It is recommended that there be less gossip about the negative ideology around the tou'a, and more encouragement of implementing traditional components to kava groups that currently do not know or understand them. This will be hard to implement and challenging to monitor nevertheless, if there are members of the community who will embrace these ideas and make them part of their kava groups, then this may influence other groups that may choose to follow their example. There may be scope for some form of program for tou'a to help them develop and hone their craft as a tou'a.

- Would you let your daughter be a tou'a?

It was a strong no for most of the participants when the researcher asked if they would want their daughter to tou'a. One participant stated that at the beginning of this research talanoa, the answer was very clear and a definitive no regarding their daughter being a tou'a. However, she stressed that during the talanoa and with certain questions being considered, she felt that in the right setting and if there were strict traditional protocols in place, she would allow her daughter to experience that part of her culture.

The main themes of this research have highlighted the beauty of being a tou'a and the negative impact KRP have had on the tou'a and her image because of evolving KRP. With education being the key to change, it takes away some accountability of men and tou'a choosing to behave in a manner that does not align with cultural values or belief systems. Nonetheless education could be a way to promote appropriate standards within kava groups and especially the value of the tou'a. For the wider

community who do not understand or know the role of the tou'a, this would be a great opportunity to enlighten them to the purpose and meaning behind KRP and invite them to share this stunning cultural experience.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Implications, Recommendations, and Concluding Remarks

*“It’s like you have a field of thorns, those guys, they’re the field of thorns.
And then you put this beautiful rose right in the middle.” – Seini (T)*

Introduction

This chapter presents the overarching findings of this doctoral research concerning how evolving kava-related practices impact the role of Tongan women living in Aotearoa. It begins with a snapshot of the talanoa with the participant followed by the key findings around kava and women; KRP and marriage; and the tou'a. Further discussion is detailed on the implications, limitations, and recommendations garnered from this research.

5.1 Snapshot of the Participant’s Overall Perspective

When the talanoa was nearing the end, participants were asked what something is they would want to be included in this doctoral research. This simple question took the talanoa to another level with the participant's insights, and concerns. It incorporated the elements of māfana where the research transitioned from a feeling of merely being on the sidelines and watching a performance to being the lead player. As Fua (2014) states, māfana is ‘*the willingness to be part of something exciting*’ (p.55). Which from the onset, the researcher and participants believed it would be. Employing a qualitative approach within the context of public health, enabled the researcher to address or bring out the voice of complex issues. Isaacs (2014) asserts that qualitative research is primarily concerned with uncovering the "what," "how," and "why" of a particular phenomenon. Through one sentence extracted from that rich dialogue, the answers are clear, concise, and succinct in providing a snapshot of the participants experiences.

- Ane:** Faikava can be a lonely place for a young female kava consumer. Nevertheless, it is a place to make connections and strengthen family bonds.
- Lose:** Kava is not a male product but for everyone. We must learn the importance of kava and its meaning.
- Alisi:** Educate the men and how they interact with the tou’a. Support the tou’a.
- Langi:** Faikava can be a platform for the Tongan woman’s voice. But there need to be some changes.
- Seini:** The role of the tou’a is a cultural tradition and needs to be preserved. She is the rose among the men.
- Sela:** Tou'a needs to be protected and educated in their role. Faikava is about sharing the conversation regardless of gender.
- Siu:** Being a tou’a nowadays is worthless. Men need to change and treat the tou’a with love and respect. They deserve it.

Sina: Can you trust your husband when he goes to faikava? Today's kava environment is not safe for the tou'a. And you will see it on social media. If you want a tou'a there, have it done properly.

Nisi: Communication is the key to your relationship with your kava-consuming spouse. Conversations with tou'a can lead to inappropriate relationships.

Vina: Families are broken because of the tou'a. Everything depends on the woman. If she is strong, nothing will happen.

5.2 Kava and Tongan Women

Piper Methysticum is a plant also known as kava. For many cultures, its creation is surrounded by mythology and supernatural events. In the Tongan culture, it is an iconic aspect of Tongan society. Its history links Deity, to Kingship, to man, and woman. It has evolved from its original consumption during the Taumafa kava ceremony to now being a household beverage for some participants. No longer is kava a drink for the indigenous cultures from whence it came, but a commodity that has garnered consumers from all over the world. It is through this evolution that some feel that traditional components of kava and its related practices are lost. Tupou (2017) argues that some modern KRP is ignoring the traditional components of kava thereby devaluing its cultural identity. Nevertheless, there could be an argument on determining how one defines what is traditional and what is not.

Many members of the Tongan community including over half of the participants in this doctoral research, would argue that women consuming kava is not a traditional practice. Research conducted by Fehoko (2014) clearly states that the decision to exclude female participants from his research was because faikava is seen as a predominantly male activity. All participants agree that KRP is predominantly a male space. What several participants disagree with, is that many members of the Tongan community say women do not have the *right* to consume kava. When it came to women consuming kava, it was only considered appropriate at a bride's wedding or other special occasions (Taufa, 2014). 50% of the participants in this doctoral research are adamant that women should not drink kava. For the 40% that oppose this, they maintain that kava is their heritage and part of their lineage as descendants of Kava'onau who was sacrificed out of duty, love, and loyalty to the Tu'i Tonga. The Goddess Faimālie consumed kava to save the lives of those she accompanied. Therefore, if kava is a male commodity and only for men to consume, that may be seen as diminishing these acts of sacrifice by females from whence kava originated. As one looks closely at the KRP origins, three myths were highlighted in this doctoral research for their involvement with KRP. Kava'onau is believed to be the source of the kava plants' existence along with the tō (sugar cane) plant. Kava is traditionally consumed and accompanied by food to represent the kava and tō plants. 'Aho'eitu the son of Tagaloa 'Eitumatupu'a was eaten by his half-brothers who were made to regurgitate him up into a kumete (kava bowl). The grinding down of the kava root is a similitude to the demise of 'Aho'eitu and the mixing with the water is the bringing back to life the beloved son of Tagaloa 'Eitumatupu'a who

became the first Tu'i Tonga. The selfless act of Faimālie must not be underestimated as she chose to consume all the kava to live and save the lives of her companions. This may represent the loyalty and camaraderie that is often shared in the kava space. Arcia Tecun (2019) suggests that women consuming kava are a way of resurrecting the Goddess Faimālie and reclaiming their right as women to consume kava. Kava rituals are based on legends and, according to Queen Salote, it is through these kava rituals that we learn Tongan history (Bott, 1982).

According to Ralston, (1996: 110-112 as cited in Herda, Terrell, & Gunson, 1996) and Arcia Tecun, (2019), women and men were consuming kava together long before they had any contact with foreign cultures. Thus, it would be reasonable to say that, before foreign influence, Tongan women consumed kava, and post-foreign intervention, kava consumption became a man-only activity unless a female was being honoured for her role in the community or family. Arcia Tecun (2019) poses that the western cultural influence is reflected within KRP with the "*kava space being absent of women*" (p. 187).

In Aotearoa, the practice of KRP is undergoing evolution, with an increasing number of Tongan women recognising and embracing the advantageous effects that kava consumption offers them. These benefits encompass the sense of camaraderie experienced within the kava group, the support received from fellow kava consumers, and the positive effect on mental health and well-being. Kava is renowned for its pharmacological properties, such as its sedative and relaxant qualities, its potential to induce euphoria, and its reputation as a remedy for anxiety and stress (Goldin & Salani, 2022). It is inevitable that Tongan women such as the participants in this doctoral research who consume kava, are utilising kava as a natural remedy to improve their mental health and utilise its pharmacological properties to reduce stress and anxiety they may experience. According to Taufua (2014), there has been an increase in the number of females engaging in kava consumption, a practice from which they were previously restricted. The participants acknowledge this rise and anticipate more opportunities for creating spaces where women can partake in kava consumption. As noted by Arcia Tecun (2019), there are gatherings of women who meet in kava groups but prefer to keep it discreet to avoid the stigma and controversy associated with women consuming kava. Fehoko (2014) emphasized the importance of providing a culturally safe environment for Tongan females born in Aotearoa, where they can enjoy the benefits of faikava. These benefits include establishing connections with others and exploring their cultural identity, like their male counterparts of the same age group.

Participant Ane shared the experience of attending a kava group where men were having one adjacent to the women's kava group. When she walked in there was an assumption from the men that because of her age and gender, she was there to be their tou'a. Participant Ane has had to deal with this on several occasions and despite her foremost role in KRP being a kava consumer, sometimes by choice,

she will put herself in the role of the tou'a because she chooses to and not because of her being stereotyped by others because of her age and gender.

As universities are embracing KRP as a forum for talanoa amongst students and leaders, situations may arise where traditions are seen to be breached as fellow students who are related to each other want to participate in the kava group together. Every participant spoke about the importance of faka'apa'apa in KRP and knowing your lineage so that you may not breach faka'apa'apa. This is an aspect of KRP that is evolving, and impacting Tongan women as more consume kava, and to be part of non-traditional forums, may mean they breach the traditional ideology of faka'apa'apa.

Within a kainga (extended family), the relationships are intricately intertwined, encompassing a range of responsibilities and obligations shared among siblings and their children. When exploring the concept of faka'apa'apa, the participants emphasise the significance of honouring relationships, particularly between brothers, sisters, and cousins of the opposite sex. According to Famili Lelei (2012) it is the responsibility of the tuonga'ane (brother of a female) to uphold and safeguard the reputation of his tuofefine (sister of a male). It is considered a breach of tradition in KRP if cousins of the opposite sex faikava together. Cousins are often thought of as siblings and therefore it would be tapu (sacred) for a brother or cousin of the opposite sex to consume kava with their sister or female cousin. Therefore, when Ane consumes kava with her male cousin, it would be viewed as a significant breach in KRP protocol. Participants acknowledged that some may breach what is considered traditional protocols. Nevertheless, they identify that despite this, they still uphold their values and align these with KRP as much as possible. Participant Alisi reiterates this with a reminder that when she is consuming kava, she is still honouring and upholding her values. These may differ from someone else's values, but that is fine with her. Participant Alisi is a strong empowered Tongan woman who is comfortable standing up for what she believes in. She has had to fight against cultural norms by pioneering women kava groups in Aotearoa for decades.

5.3 Kava-Related Practices and Marriage

Married participants discussed openly the impact of KRP on their marriage and family. For each family, their relationship with KRP begins in the home and their understanding of what KRP means to them. Participant Nisi had been raised with a good understanding of KRP and sees it as an important way to connect with the Tongan culture. She has experienced some of the challenges that she feels have been a result of her husband's involvement in KRP. She has also seen how men in a kava group can rally together to support families when they need help. Some participants agreed that KRP was a positive thing for their husbands as it helped relieve their stress, provided a forum for them to discuss any issues they were facing, helped them stay connected to their culture, and overall made them happier husbands. Participants in Taufu's study found KRP was beneficial for the spouse and

enhanced the family unit as the husband was happy and functioned more effectively as a husband and father (Taufa, 2014).

Participant Nisi is an advocate for strengthening the relationship between husband and wife based on openness and honesty. Research conducted by Arcia Tecun (2019) conveyed some participants shared that if they had taken care of their responsibilities and duties at home, then there was less likely to be marital conflict due to KRP. In their research, Ofanoa et al. (2019) revealed that kava consumption by men had various consequences, such as reduced productivity, compromised health, and strain on their families. However, despite these drawbacks, the men in the study believed that the social and cultural advantages of kava consumption outweighed the negatives. Consequently, implementing interventions that would restrict or prohibit kava consumption was deemed unrealistic based on their perspective. Ideal interventions would be more effective through education, communication, and strengthening the family relationship. This is supported by two of the three spouses who have seen their husband alter their KRP to take care of their home responsibilities before attending kava groups. Both spouses report a decrease in marital conflict as both spouses now have input around KRP and feel less likely to resist or resent his involvement with KRP because his family is his priority.

Taufa (2014) researched Tongan women's perspectives regarding the effects of excessive kava consumption among Tongan men. Taufa's findings state that heavy kava use is a factor in the breakdown of marriages and family dynamics between father and child (Taufa, 2014). Nosa and Ofanoa (2009) also found that for some of their participants, kava consumption caused issues in their marriages leading to marriages ending. Arcia Tecun (2019) stated that a major issue with the current kava-consuming population is the frequency with that men are attending to their KRP. Taufa (2014), Nosa and Ofanoa (2009), and Arcia Tecun (2019) have all identified issues that have arisen from men involved in KRP and, all comprise the amount and frequency of kava being consumed. But this is not the only issue that has arisen in the breakdown of marriages. Participants in this doctoral research believed the following four areas were the main factors for the breakdown of marriages:

- The faikava environment
- The relationship the husband develops with the tou'a that develops over time.
- Marital issues (Communication and trust)
- Spiritual, physical, and mental health challenges

Participant Nisi feels that if there was more honesty, there would be more trust, and there would be fewer broken marriages connected to men attending kava groups. Taufa (2014) shared the viewpoint of participants where they agree that if they are in a trusting relationship then there are no arguments around KRP.

In the current climate, KRP can be seen as detrimental to the family unit as more incidents of extramarital affairs are reported in the community. According to Taufu (2014), infidelity with the tou'a and married men is not uncommon. In this doctoral research, we have a participant whose spouse left his family for a tou'a, and a participant who was a tou'a that had children with a married man from the kava group where she was a tou'a. Participant Vina believes that although being involved in KRP is not the reason for the infidelity, it can be a catalyst for adultery. If the kava environment supports inappropriate interactions with the tou'a, then inappropriate relationships will form that may lead to the betrayal of the spouse. Participant Vina experienced difficult times when her husband became romantically involved with the tou'a at his kava group. The emotional distress was amplified by the fact that the tou'a had been to Vina's home and knew he was a married man with children and responsibilities in the home. Nevertheless, Vina and all the other participants in this research are not naïve and recognise that married men make a choice to commit adultery not because they are involved with KRP, but because they choose to not honour their marital commitments.

There are clear acts of deception happening within some kava groups with men saying they are single when they are married. Participant Siu became involved with a man from the kava group unaware that he was married. It was not until she was pregnant that she found out he had a family. The man in the kava group took advantage of a vulnerable tou'a and falsely led her to believe that he was honest and trustworthy. Instead, he was deceitful to both his wife and the tou'a. Unfortunately, even though participant Siu was initially innocent, she is the one that bore the brunt of the Tongan community's disapproval. According to Taufu (2014), dealing with the problem of tou'a and married men has an easy solution, simply eliminate the tou'a role from informal kava settings. Arcia Tecun (2019) states that some men will not attend kava groups when there is a tou'a present. It will come down to what a man chooses. Some men will only go to kava groups where there is a tou'a. Participant Sina states that if your relationship is strong, and you are open and honest with each other, then there is no need to worry about your husband at the kava group because your husband will not be the one interacting inappropriately with the tou'a and then see it streamed on social media!

5.4 The Tou'a

A consistent comment made by all the participants is that there is a place for the tou'a *if* it is done traditionally. Participants shared that if the tou'a is respected, the kava setting may provide opportunities for the tou'a to be a mouthpiece for other Tongan women. KRP is understood to be a forum for transferring knowledge from lived experiences, intergenerational knowledge, and cultural values (Taufu, 2014). This includes the voice of the tou'a when she is valued and her knowledge as a Tongan woman and tou'a is sought by the kava group participants. All the participants in this doctoral research have in-depth knowledge of KRP. Two-thirds of the participants have performed the tou'a role across a variety of settings and bring a wealth of knowledge to this doctoral research. They

believe that understanding the expectations of the tou'a and others when conducted in an appropriate traditionally aligned setting is ideal. When these standards are maintained and fortified, the role of the tou'a is elevated to the position of honour and reverence. Tou'a participants knew the tou'a role and how it should be performed in a traditional setting including the strict protocols that need to be followed to ensure the well-being of all who are present. Tou'a participants who performed their role in a kava group space that valued the traditions of the KRP felt valued and were able to use the kava group as a platform to share their thoughts on various topics from a female perspective.

The role of the tou'a is more than serving and looking pretty. It is an art. An art that has evolved in some KRP and led to the tou'a being viewed in a negative light. Participant Lose warns that the current situation involving tou'a and their part in non-traditional or informal kava groups has had a ripple effect on all tou'a to the point that it is bringing their status and role as Tongan women down. Taufa (2014) states that kava is interlinked with '*status and power in Tongan hierarchical systems, particularly political and church structures*' (p. 70). Taufa (2014) further states that tou'a were traditionally of noble status however, this perception has changed due to the relaxing of restrictions on who can tou'a.

Like Helu (1993), Taufa (2014) raised concern over the introduction of money within KRP and suggested it contributed to KRP evolving away from tradition. As highlighted in the tou'a section of this doctoral research, money has had a great impact on KRP. For tou'a who have no other form of income, the tou'a role is crucial for her and sometimes her family's survival. This makes her vulnerable to immoral men who attend kava groups to interact improperly with the tou'a. This is challenging for the tou'a. She is caught between a rock and a hard place. If she does not reciprocate in some way, then the group is less likely to invite her back to tou'a. If she does respond in a way that may be construed as flirtatious, then she is at risk of inviting unwanted attention from men in the kava group. With the exchange of money for the tou'a service, the participants have shared their concerns about the way the tou'a may be perceived. According to Taufa (2014), men felt they could interact with the tou'a however they pleased because they were paying for her services. Participants in both Taufa's study and this doctoral research raised concerns that the tou'a was treated more like a prostitute. In one case a kava group employed the services of a prostitute to act as their tou'a. Actions of kava groups such as this will destroy the tou'a reputation and bring it further into disrepute. This is through no fault of the tou'a but the men of the kava group. Certain kava groups have reputations for disrespecting the tou'a. Participants who tou'a for money and accept a certain amount of banter state they would never tou'a for these groups. Tou'a are not safe in this environment.

Participant 'Alisi raised concerns over the tou'a and strongly suggests that there need to be systems in place to protect the tou'a. This includes ensuring the tou'a is in a safe setting and is transported to and from the kava group safely. If something untoward happens, then there needs to be support in place

for the tou'a such as a member of the kava group whose role is to ensure the tou'a safety. Fehoko, Hafoko, and Arcia Tecun (2020) suggest that there is a responsibility among those members of the kava group who gather around the kumete (kava bowl) and share indigenous education within these meaningful relationships (p. 10). If one is to honour these relationships, then this must extend beyond the kava group and their responsibility to ensure the safety of all involved including the tou'a.

5.5 Implications and Recommendations

This chapter identifies the theoretical and practical implications of this research, with supporting recommendations. These include the utilisation of talanoa and tauhi vā as methodologies that are beneficial when both are used in a methodological approach, and education is the key to change when working with those impacted by KRP.

5.5.1 Theoretical Implications

When this research design was conceptualised in the Teu stage, it was always desirable to utilise a qualitative paradigm. This was to ensure that the participants were able to share their lived experiences, in a way that would not hinder their responses, or limit their ability to respond, if a structured quantitative approach had been implemented. Talanoa was the ideal methodological approach to enhance the research process, especially with Tongan participants. However, when data collection had finished, it was abundantly clear that the utilisation of tauhi vā was of equal value and aligned with the talanoa ideology.

Tauhi vā is considered a combination of 'tauhi (nurturing, caring, and sharing), and vā (human space) (Ka'ili, 2017, p. 31). According to Fāmili lelei (2012), their definition is, 'tauhi vaha'a/vā: to be prepared to fight/take on the challenges of maintaining relationships' (p. 11). Tauhi vā is how the relationships within these spaces are nurtured, strengthened, and maintained.

When the tou'a is respected and valued in her role, the participants agreed that it is a space that one would want to be a tou'a in. As the tou'a was supported and nurtured in her role, the relationship she developed with the men was one of trust, transference of knowledge, and respect encompassed in a safe space. Participants who shared their experience with kava consumption conveyed their experiences of developing and strengthening relationships within the kava group. The relationships were established and nurtured with fellow kava group members, and the family members they took with them to the kava group. Tauhi vā was positive as relationships were cultivated in a space that fostered the value of relationships.

The vā is the relational space. It is the space in which we sit and make connections or relate to one another. According to Ka'ili (2005), vā is 'the space between people or things' (p. 90). Vā has layers that are interwoven within its context. Vā may indicate the quality or strength of the relationship (Ka'ili, 2017). In the kava space, the participants spoke of the close relations the men have with one

another that made KRP a positive experience. When addressing the issues in marital relationships, there were a couple of points raised in this doctoral research. One was the support that some participants felt their husbands received from the men in their kava group. It was a space where they felt they could talanoa and share anything with the kava group. The men felt loved and supported within this space signifying vālelei. Ka'ili (2017) defines vālelei as *'harmonious and beautiful social spaces between people'* (p. 26). The second was the discomfort the kava group members felt when they were aware of a fellow kava group participant betraying his wife with the tou'a. This was because the men in the group knew the family members as well. This caused some cognitive dissonance for some members of the kava group and strained relationships. This may align with what Ka'ili (2017) described as vātamaki, *'disharmonious social spaces'* (p. 26).

When discussing tauhi vā and the interweaving of a mat, the connections and relations in the kava space are interwoven not only with the men in the kava group, but their families. The decisions they make in that environment impact their families outside of that space. Arcia Tecun (2019) conveys how women are impacted by the added stress and burdens that are placed on them due to their husband's involvement with KRP (p. 176).

Like the kakala weaving metaphor upon which guides this doctoral research, vā too is connected metaphorically to weaving together ancestral connections. According to Ka'ili (2005), *'a person is woven genealogically from multiple and overlapping kinship strands'* (p.91). This doctoral research highlighted the young Pacific population in Aotearoa and the importance of tauhi vā in the home. The interweaving of relationships they forge with their tupu'anga, their family, their church, and the wider community is paramount. Since vā is the social space between individuals or groups, it relates to how individuals connect in groups, and to one another (Ka'ili, 2017, p.91).

As KRP evolve, so do the interweaving of relations that are constantly evolving within the vā in these spaces. For example, faka'apa'apa has been identified by the participants as a traditional component of KRP. Through the evolution of KRP, some university kava groups do not adhere to this. As Arcia Tecun (2019) explained, kava groups where men and women consume kava together are growing (p. 197). Understanding the relationships within these spaces, and how they interweave with one another enables those who research indigenous cultures to appreciate the intricacies of these relationships. The fluidity of the vā as people come in and out of that space, provides an environment that is unique to those that are present. Within that space sits the perspective, and perception of everyone that is contributing to the vā in that kava group.

Other theoretical implications for this doctoral research on kava-related practices include:

1. Cultural Identity: This doctoral research contributes to the understanding of how kava-related practices shape and influence Tongan cultural identity. It explores the significance of these practices in maintaining cultural traditions, values, and beliefs within the Tongan community.

2. **Gender Dynamics:** By examining the experiences of Tongan women in relation to KRP, this doctoral research sheds light on the gender dynamics within Tongan society. It explores the roles and expectations placed on women in these practices and how they navigate their involvement in traditionally male-dominated spaces.
3. **Social and Cultural Evolution:** This doctoral research highlights the evolution of KRP over time and their impact on Tongan communities. It explores how these practices have changed, adapted, or been influenced by external factors such as migration and societal changes, providing insights into the resilience and adaptability of Tongan culture.
4. **Ethical Frameworks:** The utilisation of the Kakala framework and adherence to Tongan ethics in this doctoral research have theoretical implications for research methodologies. It demonstrates the importance of incorporating cultural and ethical considerations into the research process, particularly when studying communities with distinct cultural practices and values.
5. **Community Engagement and Empowerment:** This doctoral research emphasises the importance of community engagement and giving voice to marginalised perspectives. It provides a platform for Tongan women to share their experiences and challenges, contributing to their empowerment and advocating for their rights and agency within KRP.
6. **Intersectionality:** By acknowledging the diverse roles and experiences of Tongan women within KRP, this doctoral research highlights the intersectionality of gender, culture, and other social identities. It recognises that individuals' experiences are shaped by multiple factors and calls for a nuanced understanding of how these intersecting identities influence their participation and decision making.

These theoretical implications contribute to the broader academic dialogue on cultural practices, gender dynamics, social change, and community engagement, providing valuable insights into the complexities of KRP within Tongan society.

5.5.2 Theoretical Recommendations:

Given the importance of ethical frameworks and the utilisation of Tongan ethics in this doctoral research, it is recommended to promote the integration of culturally sensitive and ethically responsible research practices in future studies. This could involve developing guidelines or protocols for researchers studying similar cultural contexts, ensuring that research processes prioritise the well-being and agency of participants. For researchers working with Tongan participants, it is beneficial to utilise talanoa and tauhi vā as methodologies. This is to ensure the participant /researcher relationship is developed and nurtured, and the dialogue is free flowing in an environment that values both researcher, and participant and implements Tonga ethics.

Tauhi vā establishes and upholds the relationship between researcher and participant. The vā is the space that connects the researcher and the participant. Creating a space that fosters an environment that augments the talanoa, enhances the forthcoming of information and data. It is the initial step to ensure effective data collection. The next step is to establish and nurture the participant /researcher relationship by identifying familial, academic, cultural, social, and any other commonalities through which you establish a connection and build rapport. Building and nurturing that relationship is crucial to the research if your goal is to provide accurate, in-depth information in qualitative research.

Building on this doctoral research findings about the significance of kava-related practices in maintaining cultural traditions, values, and beliefs, it is recommended to explore strategies for preserving Tongan cultural identity. This could involve supporting community initiatives that promote the continued tradition and understanding of KRP.

Given the insights gained regarding gender dynamics within kava-related practices, it is recommended to advocate for greater gender equality and empowerment within Tongan society. This could involve raising awareness about the diverse roles and contributions of Tongan women in kava-related practices and working towards creating inclusive spaces that allow for their active participation and leadership.

To further enhance the theoretical implications of this doctoral research, it is recommended to incorporate interdisciplinary perspectives. This could involve exploring connections between kava-related practices and broader fields such as anthropology, sociology, gender studies, or cultural studies. By drawing on diverse disciplinary lenses, a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities of kava-related practices can be achieved.

Based on this doctoral research's theoretical implications, it is recommended to consider the development of policies and community interventions that address the challenges and opportunities identified. This could involve collaborating with relevant stakeholders, such as community organizations, policymakers, and cultural institutions, to create supportive environments for the practice of kava-related rituals and to address gender inequalities and social dynamics.

This doctoral research has provided opportunities for further research in specific aspects identified in this doctoral research, such as the intersectionality of gender, culture, and other social identities within KRP. This can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the nuanced experiences and perspectives of individuals involved in KRP. By considering these theoretical recommendations, this doctoral research has the potential to make valuable contributions to academic discourse while also having practical implications for preserving culture, promoting gender equality, fostering ethical research practices, and supporting community development in the context of KRP within Tongan society.

5.5.3 Practical Implications

The researcher embarked on this study in response to the dearth of research available on Tongan women, and KRP. It was necessary to develop research that would add to the current pool of kava research and contribute informative data. This was to bridge the gaps in this area, especially where Tongan women are concerned. Taufu (2014) identified the need for further research on KRP from a female perspective, particularly from the tou'a, and the impact her role has on her family. This doctoral research has been able to complement Taufu's research by amplifying the voice of the spouse and providing perspectives from the tou'a, and the female kava consumer. Fehoko (2014) suggested further research be conducted on broader aspects of KRP to include the impact on families. This doctoral research has addressed the impact of KRP on multiple aspects including families, communities, and the role of Tongan women. As KRP have evolved, changes have been made to the perceived role of a Tongan woman, and the research explored how this impacted the participants. By utilising thematic analysis, the research has been able to extract multiple aspects of KRP from several perspectives. This doctoral research explored the roles women play in KRP around culture, and family. The importance of family, and how they influence decision-making around KRP was identified. This doctoral research discussed how KRP have evolved, the benefits and repercussions that have occurred, and the challenges tou'a faced as her role evolved.

This doctoral research established a platform from which to bring forth the voice of the Tongan woman and enlighten the wider community about the protocols, traditions, and values of the roles performed in KRP. The emphasis of this doctoral research is 'honouring of the participant's own words as generative of meaning and knowledge,' and then disseminating the findings (Chandler, Anstey, & Ross, 2015). This unique voice provides vital information that will be beneficial to various entities connected to the Tongan community. There are many great things present when adhering to the traditional side of KRP, but there is a dark side that has been identified in this doctoral research. Women's safety is being compromised. Therefore, communities affected by this will have to look at implementing systems to protect these women and help those who have been traumatised as a result of their involvement with KRP.

5.5.4 Practical Recommendations:

Education or the transferring of knowledge was voiced by all participants as essential if, KRP are to become a safe space for all participants. According to Taufu (2014), education that includes a Pacific perspective would need to include cultural competency from policymakers that understand the implications of kava and culture. Church and community leaders may contribute to formulating education around the needs of the local kava community and ensuring their cultural needs are met whilst aligning their values with that of their spiritual belief systems (Fehoko, 2014, p. 34).

Community members coming together to preserve an iconic cultural marker like kava through

education is necessary. Education within the kava setting for group members creates an environment where topics that are at times inappropriate to discuss in a family setting, may become acceptable within the kava group setting. Arcia Tecun (2019) explains that within the kava setting, fathers can educate their sons about subjects that may be Tapu (sacred) to discuss elsewhere such as education around sexual practices.

Participants have discussed the opportunities that they have been given to share their knowledge in the kava setting and educate the group on aspects of health. Spouse participants spoke of their husbands being educated on healthy behaviour in a marital relationship and guided on how to implement change. Therefore, it appears several avenues may provide possible education opportunities. A key consideration is that education around KRP may be most effective within these practices. For the men who attend kava groups, having a respected person talanoa with the men in the kava group about cultural expectations, the role of the men, and the tou'a role, may be effective in ensuring appropriate behaviour within that setting. How the men interact with the tou'a and the language they use when addressing her would create an environment of harmonious relationships which Ka'ili (2017) states are a key aspect of tauhi vā in the kava space. Kava groups may also provide an opportunity for tou'a to pass on knowledge to one another and guide tou'a through KRP. Tou'a could utilise the wisdom of a chaperone to guide the tou'a in her role whilst ensuring the men in the group honour their role.

Supporting the tou'a would be a respected man in the kava group who will provide a role as a protector of the tou'a like a father figure to her. Arcia Tecun (2019) refers to the importance of protecting the sacred cultural components of KRP. The tou'a role is a sacred cultural identity of KRP. Protecting her role and what it signifies is an important aspect of KRP and one that needs to be acknowledged for the important place it holds within the Tongan kava culture. Education on all these components will contribute to preserving the cultural aspects of KRP that are evolving away from tradition. Talanoa around the challenges women face in KRP that have been highlighted in this doctoral research provides areas of discussion that would benefit from being addressed within the kava group environment and the wider community. Families may take advantage of this doctoral research to address any concerns they have about KRP within their family setting, and devise ways to manage them. Education whether at home, in the community, at church, or within KRP has been identified by the participants as a necessary key to changing the current inappropriate practices around kava.

5.6 Concluding Remarks

The findings of this doctoral research have presented a platform from which the participant's voice has been projected. This research cannot end without acknowledging the valuable contribution the participants have made to this research. Their contribution will be a legacy to others. As the participants talked about fears, they have regarding the tou'a, they believe it is necessary to implement

some form of protection for the tou'a. Education is the key to initiating change. This is necessary regarding the role of the tou'a, and to recognise the misconception that kava is a male commodity not to be consumed by women. Kava groups may provide a forum to deliver guidance, and education to reclaim cultural practices that honour the role of those involved in KRP. As a woman's role evolves, this will enable her to participate in KRP in whatever capacity she feels is appropriate for her. As knowledge is shared, opportunities will arise to discuss areas around KRP that may not have been addressed previously.

The following key points of this doctoral research may bring about robust discussions in families, and the community, as awareness increases around KRP:

- Women have the right to choose whether to consume kava or not. If one says they wish to follow the Tongan tradition of KRP, then it is important to establish if this is prior or post-foreign influence. Before foreigners arrived in Tonga, women and men consumed kava together (Ralston, 1996: 110-112 as cited in Herda, Terrell, & Gunson, 1996). It is important to state where they consider the tradition they adhere to begins. If one is to honour the legends, and history of KRP, then one must not overlook Kava'onau, Faimālie, and the sacrifices they made. If they position themselves post missionaries arriving in Tonga and do not condone women consuming kava, then it is necessary to state that. There is no right or wrong to what one considers their tradition. It is personal to that person. However, traditions surrounding KRP will differ depending on where your traditional belief system stems from.
- KRP can be a good thing for family relations if the family is prioritised over the kava group. Participants from this doctoral research, and research by Taufā (2014, and Arcia Tecun (2019) identified that KRP can have a positive impact on families. If relationships at home are strong, the men's family responsibilities are taken care of, and the men are in a kava group where the group's values align with his family values.
- When infidelity occurs, it is not the kava being consumed, but factors that may impact decision-making. This may include the environment of the kava group, the relationship that is developed with the tou'a, declining marital relations, and spiritual, physical, and mental health challenges. Some participants believe that the kava group does not cause infidelity but may provide an opportunity for inappropriate relationships to develop.
- The tou'a role holds a significant place in KRP, and Tongan culture. It has been one of reverence and honour. Participants believe that it is an important role in Tongan society and one that should be upheld.
- Some participants stated that when money became included in KRP, then it changed the dynamics of some kava groups. The obvious one is the paying of the tou'a. For many tou'a, it has provided a much-needed income. For some men in kava groups, it has allowed them to help someone in need. However, there is the negative side where tou'a who are vulnerable, are

being coerced into inappropriate relationships. Tou'a are developing relationships with married men, and money is being used to negotiate services from a tou'a outside the traditional role of the tou'a. These decisions have led to marriage breakdowns, abuse, and the establishment of relationships based on dishonesty.

Education may provide a solution to change. Education for the family, the tou'a, the kava group, and the wider community, may be effective in adapting to evolving KRP. Learning Tongan culture, and history, through understanding kava rituals, and the place KRP have in Tongan society can lead to positive change. As KRP and the roles that are impacted by this evolve, so too must the way we view KRP. Educating the history of women and KRP may foster a broader acceptance of women in the kava setting as more than just someone to serve the kava and look pretty. When KRP are treated with the respect, and the dignity it deserves, KRP are aligned within the cultural context from whence it began.

Within the realms of education, the pursuit of knowledge is paramount. Through the implementation of the kakala research framework, it highlights the significance of reflection and assessment in determining the value and impact of the knowledge that has been cocreated and revealed in this doctoral research. Implementing mālie implies the need to reflect and ascertain if this knowledge revealed through this doctoral research is beneficial and adding to the development of wisdom to those who have participated in this doctoral research, to those who will read it, and to those who will be impacted by the findings of this doctoral research directly or indirectly. Transformation has already begun as the participants have felt empowered through providing a voice to their experiences which will add value to the existing pool of knowledge on KRP and sustain the emergence of new information.

This chapter provided a summary of the main findings from the doctoral research, which focused on exploring the influence of evolving KRP on the role of Tongan women in Aotearoa. By presenting an overview of the talanoa conducted with the participants, this doctoral research established context for the subsequent findings. These key findings that have been presented in this doctoral research, highlight the impact of KRP on women, the relationship between KRP and marriage, and the significance of the tou'a. Further discussion detailed the implications, limitations, and recommendations derived from the research, providing further insights for future exploration in this area.

After employing the kakala framework, it is crucial to highlight the final stage of the research process known as māfana. This phase centres around seeking validation to assess the transformative influence of the research on the researcher, participants, and other stakeholders involved. In accordance with Fua's (2014) definition of māfana, this research aligns with its core components of the final evaluation process within the kakala framework where the research aims to determine whether transformation

has occurred and assess the applicability and sustainability of the research. Through feedback from the participants, this doctoral research has empowered both participants and the researcher, generated new insights and solutions, and fostered a deeper understanding of KRP. As a result, this doctoral research contributes valuable and meaningful content and context to the existing body of research pertaining to KRP. As the findings are disseminated this doctoral research has the potential to transform, empower, educate, and cocreate further knowledge on KRP.

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Appendixes

Glossary of Terms

Tongan/Māori	English
Anga faka-Tonga	The Tongan way of life
Anga fakatokilalo/loto tō:	Humility/Open to learning
Aotearoa	New Zealand
Faikava	To do Kava
Faikava ‘eva	Faikava for Courtship
Faka’apa’apa	Respect
Faka’eke’eke	The act of asking direct questions.
Fakatokilalo	Humility
Fangatua	Men and women boxing and wrestling matches
Fau	Woody fibre from the Hibiscus sp tree
Fetokoni’aki	Reciprocity and responsibility for each other
Fe’ofa’aki	love, compassion
Feveitokai	caring, generosity
Finemotu’a	Woman
Fonua	Land
Fu’u Kape	Giant Taro
Hohoni	Coconut shell jug
‘Ilo	Knowledge
Ipu	Cup

Kakala	Garland
Kalapu Kava	Kava Club
Kirikiroa	Hamilton
Kumete	Wooden kava bowl
Kupesi	Patterns, designs
Lalofonua	Underworld
Langi	Sky
Lototō	Humility
Lau in lau'i	talk about others/gossip
Mamahi'i me'a	Loyalty, devotion, passion
Matāpule	Chiefs' spokesperson
Ngatu Kupesi	Tapa cloth patterns
'Ofa	Love, care, and kindness
Pālagi	European (White person)
Pelu	Folded banana leaf cup
Poto	Skills
Pulu	Coconut Husks
Punake	Choreographer
Tā	Time
Talanoa	Talk about nothing/anything. Have a conversation
Tāmaki-makau-rau	Auckland

Tangai	Small thin cloth bag
Tāno'a	Kava bowl for Royal occasions
Tapu	Sacred
Tatatau	Tattoo (strike symmetrically)
Tauhi vā	Building and nurturing relationships
Taumafa Kava	Royal Kava Ceremony
Te Raki Paewhenua	North Shore (Auckland)
Tou'a Fefine	Female kava server
Tou'a Tangata	Male kava server
Tumumosi	Removing beauty spots off the body with a burning rolled ngatu (tapa cloth)
Tupu'anga	Ancestors: From whence you came.
Tutu'u nima	Cutting off part of the little finger when a person of stature passes away
'Umu	Underground oven
Vā	Relational Space
Vaka	Canoe

Invitation Letter



Are you a Tongan female, over 18, and have been or are involved in kava-related practices? Are you a

- **Tou'a**
- **Kava consumer, or**
- **Spouse of a kava drinker?**

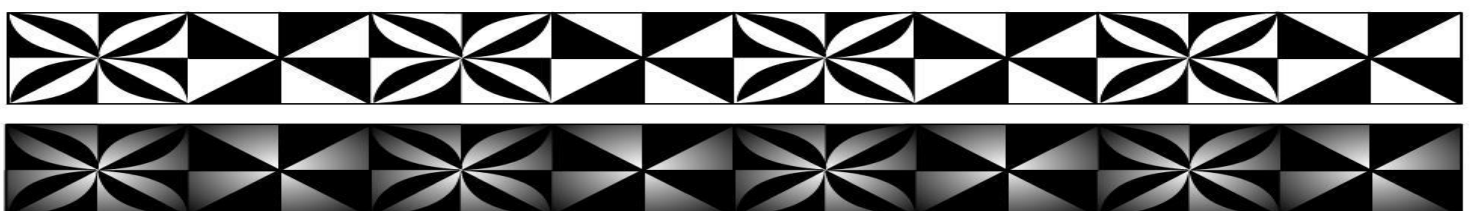


I am conducting research on evolving kava practices and how this may impact Tongan women and their perceived role with kava-related practices in Aotearoa.

If you are interested in sharing your experience, or just want to know more about the research, **I would love to hear from you!**

For more information, please contact the primary researcher.

Hilda Port at: kavaevolution@gmail.com





Consent Form

Interviews

Project title: How do evolving kava related practices impact the lives of Tongan women and their perceived role in kava-related practices?

Project Supervisor: **Dr El-Shadan TAUTOLO**

Researcher: **Hilda PORT**

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 09/07/2020.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed. This information may be accessed by the primary researcher, supervisors, and research assistant.
- I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.
- I understand that if I withdraw from the study then I will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.
- I agree to take part in this research.
- I wish to receive a summary of the research findings (please tick one): Yes No

Participants signature :

.....

Participants name :

.....

Participants Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....
.....

Date:/...../2020

***Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on July 10, 2020 AUTEK
Reference number 20/59***

Participant Information Sheet

English Version

Date Information Sheet Produced:

July 09, 2020

Project Title

How do evolving kava-related practices impact the lives of Tongan women and their perceived role within kava-related practices in Aotearoa.

An Invitation

Mālō e lelei. My name is Hilda Port, and I would like to invite you to participate in this research regarding kava related practices. This research is part of my working towards my PhD. I value greatly your views, and feelings regarding this. It gives you an opportunity to share your views on kava related practices. Your participation is voluntary and will be greatly appreciated. I humbly ask for your assistance. Would you like to help me?

What is the purpose of this research?

This research aims to gather information from a female perspective on their experience with kava and related practices. The reason for this research is to hear a different perspective to what is currently presented in the research field on kava. Your personal experience is valuable to this research. Once the information is gathered, the researcher will identify themes and patterns within each participant's experience. As there is currently very little research on the effects of kava related practices on women, this research aims to bridge this gap and contribute to the current pool of kava research. The findings of this research will then be written up and shared with the community through academic publications and presentations.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

You have been identified as a potential participant for this research because:

- you are female.
- of Tongan descent
- over the age of 18 years,
- are currently or have been connected in some way to Kava Related Practices either as a:
 - Tou'a
 - Kava consumer
 - Spouse of male kava consumer

How do I agree to participate in this research?

Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice). You are able to withdraw from the research study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the research study, then you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to you removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of your data may not be possible.

If you choose to participate in the research, please contact the researcher through [**kavaevolution@gmail.com**](mailto:kavaevolution@gmail.com). The researcher will then contact you to discuss your participation and send an information pack with a consent form.

What will happen in this research?

You will be asked to commit to an individual talanoa that will take approximately 90 minutes. The purpose of this interview is to gather your views, experiences, beliefs, and opinions on kava related practices. This will take place at AUT North campus and will be recorded in order to be transcribed.

What will happen in the talanoa?

When you arrive for our talanoa, you will be greeted and by the primary researcher who will go through a brief questionnaire to make sure you know what you are agreeing to. If you are willing, then you and the primary researcher will talanoa (talk) about specific areas regarding your involvement and role with kava-related practices. At the conclusion of the talanoa you will be given a voucher as a thank you for your time and participation. Refreshments will be provided so please let the primary researcher know if you have any food allergies.

What are the discomforts and risks?

The topic we will be discussing may make you feel uncomfortable depending on your experiences. Some participants may experience emotional dysregulation. This is when you may experience uncomfortable emotions or feelings and find them difficult to control or respond to. If this happens, we aim to ensure you feel safe and supported throughout the research process. If you feel you may want some personal support through the talanoa, you are welcome to bring a support person. Your participation is important to us however, if you have any concerns about sharing your experience, please discuss with the researcher prior to committing to participate.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

Your experience with kava related practices is valuable to us. Nevertheless, If the topic causes you any form of discomfort or distress, you will be able to access AUT Health Counselling and Wellbeing service. We can offer you three free sessions of confidential counselling support. These sessions are only available for issues that have arisen directly as a result of your participation in this research and are not for other general counselling needs. To access these services, you will need to:

- drop into our centres at WB219 or AS104 or phone 921 9992 City Campus or 921 9998 North Shore campus to make an appointment. Appointments for South Campus can be made by calling 921 9992.
- let the receptionist know that you are a research participant, and provide the title of my research and my name and contact details as given in this Information Sheet

You can find out more information about AUT counsellors and counselling on <http://www.aut.ac.nz/being-a-student/current-postgraduates/your-health-and-wellbeing/counselling>.

What are the benefits?

Your experience with kava related practices is valuable and will provide a voice for Tongan women in the community. This research is an opportunity for you to share your experience which may resonate with other Tongan women and encourage them to share their experiences also.

How will my privacy be protected?

Your details will be identified through a number code that is unique to you. Only the researcher and research assistant may know your identity which will be kept in the strictest of confidence. This is to protect you from any unforeseen risk factors that the dissemination of this research may incur. All data collected will be kept locked on the computer or in a locked filing cabinet in a locked room. Your information will only be accessed by the primary researcher, their supervisors, and the research assistant.

Your privacy is important, and we will keep all our information confidential except: if you disclose or state that you are a risk to yourself, others, or that you are in danger from someone else. The primary researcher is obligated by New Zealand law to share information related to imminent harm or risk.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

Participating in this research will require you to commit to a 90-minute interview followed by a 90minute group talanoa approximately 3 months later. The researcher may need to contact you briefly after the individual talanoa if she has any questions regarding your talanoa.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

It is important for you to take time to ponder participating in this research. If you feel that this research is something you want to contribute to and be a part of, then please contact the researcher within one month of receiving this invitation.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

If you would like to receive feedback from this research a brief summary of the findings will be available for you, accompanied with a link to the thesis.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor,

Associate Professor El-Shadan Tautolo, dan.tautolo@aut.ac.nz 921 9999 ext. 7527

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTECH,

Dr Carina Meares, ethics@aut.ac.nz, 921 9999 ext. 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Researcher Contact Details:

Hilda Port kavaevolution@gmail.com

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Associate Professor El-Shadan Tautolo, dan.tautolo@aut.ac.nz 921 9999 ext. 7527

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on *July 10,2020*. AUTECH Reference number 20/59.

Tongan

Pepa Fakamatala 'o e tokotaha 'oku kau mai.

'Aho na'e fa'u ai 'a e Pepa Fakamatala:

14 Novema 2019

‘Oku uesia fēfē 'e he ngaahi founga fengau'e'aki kava, e mo'ui 'a e kau fafine Tonga?

Ko ha fakaafe.

Mālō e lelei. Ko hoku hingoa ko Hilda Port, pea 'oku ou fie fakaafe'i koe ke kau mai ki he fakatotolo ko 'eni 'oku fekau'aki moe kava pea mo ha ngaahi founga 'oku fekau'aki mo ia. Ko e fakatotolo ko 'eni ko e kongia ia 'o 'eku ngaue ki he'eku mata'itohi tok etā filōsefa pe ko e PhD. 'Oku ou mahu'inga'ia lahi 'i ho'omou ngaahi fakakaukau mo e ngaahi ongo fekau'aki mo e me'a ni. 'Oku ne 'oatu kiate koe ha faingāmaliē ke vahevahe ai ho'o ngaahi fakakaukau fekau'aki moe ngaahi founga ngāue 'oku fekau'aki moe kava. 'Oku fai tau'atāina pe ho'o kau mai pea 'oku fakahounga' i ia. 'Oku ou kole 'i he loto fakatōkilalo ho'o tokoni mai. 'Oku ke fie tokoni mai kiate au?

Ko e hā 'a e taumu'a 'o e fakatotolo ko 'eni?

'Oku fakataumu'a e fekumi ko 'eni ke tānaki ha fakamatala mei ha 'ilo 'o ha kau fafine ki he'enua a'usia moe ngaahi angafai fekau'aki moe kava. Ko e 'uhinga 'o e fekumi ko 'eni ke fanongo ki ha fakakaukau makehe mei he me'a 'oku lolotonga fakahoko 'i he tafa'aki ki he fekumi 'i he kava. 'Oku mahu'inga ho'o a'usia fakatautaha ki he fekumi ko 'eni. 'I he tānaki pē 'a e fakamatala, 'e 'ilo' i 'e he tokotaha 'oku ne fai e fakatotolo 'a e ngaahi kaveinga mo e sipinga 'i he a'usia 'a e tokotaha takitaha. 'I he lolotonga ni, 'oku si' i ha fakatotolo ki he ola 'o e ngaahi founga 'oku fai ki he kava 'oku fekau'aki mo e kakai fefine, koia ai, 'oku taumu'a 'a e fekumi ko 'eni ke fakafehokotaki 'a e

vāmama’o ko 'eni pea mo tokoni ki he fakalahi koia ‘oe ‘ilo kihe founga fengae’aki ‘oe kava. 'E toki hiki leva 'a e ngaahi me'a na'e ma'u mei he

fakatotolo ko 'eni pea vahevahe mo e komiuniti ako 'i he ngaahi pulusi mo e ngaahi polokalama fakaako.

Ko e hā e founga ne u 'ilo'i ai mo e 'uhinga 'oku fakaafe'i ai au ke u kau 'i he fakatotolo ko 'eni?

Kuo 'iloa koe ko ha tokotaha 'e ala kau atu ki he fekumi ko 'eni koe'uhi:

- Ko e fefine koe
- 'O ha hako'i Tonga
- Ta'u 18 pē lahi hake
- 'Oku lolotonga fakahoko pe 'oku 'i ai ha'o kaunga kau mo ha ngaahi founga kava fekau'a ki mo ha'o hoko koe:

- Tou'a
- Ma'u kava
- Mali 'o ha tangata ma'u kava

Ko e hā ha founga 'oku ou loto fiemalie ai ke kau 'i he fakatotolo ko 'eni?

'I ho'o kau mai ki he fakatotolo ko 'eni, 'oku ke tau'atāina ai (ko e fili pe ia 'a'au). 'Oku lava ke ke mavahe mei he fakatotolo ako 'i ha fa'ahinga taimi pē. Kapau te ke fili ke mavahe mei he fakatotolo ako, 'e fakahoko leva kiate koe 'a e fili 'i he vaha'a 'o ha fa'ahinga fakamatala pē 'oku ke kau ki ai, pē koe faka'atā ke kei hokohoko atu hono ngaue 'aki. Neongo ia, ko 'ene pulusi pe 'a e ngaahi me'a kuo 'ilo, he 'ikai lava leva ke to'o ho'o fakamatala.

Kapau te ke fili ke kau 'i he fekumi, kataki 'o fetu'utaki ki he tokotaha 'oku ne fai e ngaahi fakatotolo ni 'ihe kavaevolution@gmail.com. 'E fetu'utaki atu leva 'a e tokotaha ni ke fakahinohino mo alea'i ho'o kau mai pea 'oatu mo e fakamatala 'oku fa'o 'i ha foomu fakangofua.

Ko e hā e me'a 'e hoko 'i he fakatotolo ko 'eni?

'E kole atu ke tukupā ki ha talanoa 'e meimei miniti pē 'e 90. Ko e taumu'a 'o e talanoa ko 'eni ke fakatahataha'i ho'o ngaahi fakakaukau, ngaahi a'usia, tui, mo e ngaahi fakakaukau moe ngaahi founga fengae'aki 'oe kava. 'E fakahoko 'eni 'i he 'api ako'anga AUT 'i North Shore, pea 'e lekooti 'eni ke lava hiki.

Ko e ha 'e hoko 'i he talanoa?

'I he taimi te ke a'u mai ai ki he talanoa, 'e talitali koe 'e he tokotaha 'oku ha'ana e fakatotolo, te nau foua ha ngaahi fehu'i nounou ke fakapapau'i 'oku ke 'ilo'i e me'a 'oku ke loto fiemalie ki ai. Kapau 'oku ke loto fiemalie ki ai, te ke talanoa leva moe tokotaha fakatotolo, (talk) 'o kau ki ha ngaahi feitu'u pau fekau'aki mo ho'o kaunga, pea mo ho'o fatongia 'i he ngaahi founa kava 'oku fekau'aki mo ia. 'I he faka'osinga e talanoa 'e 'oatu kiate kimoutolu ha vausia (voucher) ko ha fakamalo atu ho'o tokoni pea mo ho taimi 'i ho'o kau mai. 'E 'oatu ha ki'i fakaneifua, ki ho'o hela mai. Kataki fetu'utaki kihe tokotaha fakatotolo kapau 'oku 'i ai ha ngaahi me'akai 'oku 'ikai ke lelei kiate koe.

Ko e hā 'a e ngaahi me'a 'oku 'ikai fakafiemālie mo fakatu'utamaki?

'E ala 'ai 'e he tefito ko'eni 'oku mau alea'i, ke ongo'i ta'e fiemalie 'o fakatatau ki ho'o ngaahi a'usia. 'E ala a'usia 'e ha ni'ihī 'o kinautolu 'oku kau mai ha ngaahi ongo kehekehe fakaeloto. 'E lava ke ke a'usia heni e ongo'i ta'e fiemalie mo e ngaahi ongo 'e faingata'a ke lava mapule'i pe tali. Kapau 'e hoko 'eni, 'oku mau taumu'a ke fakapapau'i 'oku ke ongo'i malu mo poupu'i lolotonga e fakahoko e founa 'o e fekumi. Kapau 'oku ke ongo'i te ke fie ma'u ha tokoni fakatautaha lolotonga e talanoa, 'e talitali lelei koe ke 'omai ha taha ke hoko ko ho'o poupu. 'Oku mahu'inga kiate kimautolu ho'o kau mai, ka neongo ia, kapau 'oku 'i ai ha me'a 'oku ke hoha'a ki ai fekau'aki mo ho'o vahevahe ho'o a'usia, kataki 'o talanoa mo e tokotaha fai fakahinohino kimu'a pea ke tukupa ke kau.

'E lava fēfē ke to'o atu 'a e ngaahi ta'e fiemalie mo e fakatu'utamaki ko 'eni?

'Oku mahu'inga kiate kimautolu ho'o ngaahi angafai 'oku kava fekau'aki moe kava. Neongo ia, kapau 'e fakatupu 'e he tefito ha fa'ahinga fotunga pe 'o e ongo'i ta'efiemalie pe loto mamahi, te ke lava 'o hu ki he AUT Health Counselling mo e ngaue tokoni Wellbeing. Te mau lava 'o 'oatu ha fakataha'anga tau'ataina 'e tolu 'oku 'ikai fakahahaholo ke tokoni kiate koe. 'Oku toki lava pe ke ma'u 'a e ngaahi fakataha ko 'eni ki he ngaahi me'a ko ia 'oku nau hoko tonu ko ha ola 'o ho'o kau 'i he fakatotolo ko 'eni, ka 'oku 'ikai ki ha ngaahi fie ma'u kehe. Ke hū ki he ngaahi fakataha'anga ko 'eni, 'e fie ma'u ke:

- me'a mai ki he'emaui ngaahi senitā 'i WB219 pe ko AS104 pē telefoni kihe fika 921 9992, pē koe 'apiako he sitī pe 'i he 'apiako North shore 'i he fika 921 9998, ke alea'i ha taimi. 'E lava ke fai ha 'apoinimeni ki he 'apiako Saute 'i he fika 921 9992.
- tuku ke 'ilo 'e he tokotaha sekelitali ko ha taha fekumi koe, pea ke 'oange 'a e hingoa 'o 'eku fakatotolo mo hoku hingoa 'a 'aku, mo e fakaikiiki ki he fetu'utaki 'o hange ko ia 'oku 'omi 'i he la'ipepa fakamatala ko 'eni. 'E lava ke ke ma'u ha fakamatala 'oku toe lahi ange fekau'aki mo e ngaahi Counsellors 'ae AUT 'ihe

<http://www.aut.ac.nz/being-a-student/current-postgraduates/your-health-and-wellbeing/counselling>.

Ko e hā e ngaahi lelei 'oku ma'u mei ai?

'Oku mahu'inga ho'o a'usia fekau'aki moe ngaahi founa fengau'e'aki 'oe kava, ke ne 'omi ha le'o ki he kakai fefine Tonga 'i he komiuniti. Ko e fakatotolo ko 'eni ko ha faingamalie ia kiate koe ke vahevahe ha me'a ne ke a'usia 'a ia 'e lava ke ongo atu ai ki he kau fafine Tonga, pea fakalotolahi'i kinautolu ke vahevahe 'enau ngaahi a'usia foki.

'E malu'i fēfē 'a 'eku totonu fakafo'ituitui?

'E ma'u ho'o ngaahi fakaikiiki 'i ha kouti 'oku makehe kiate koe. Ko kinautolu pe 'oku nau fai e tokoni ki he kau fai savea mo e kau 'etivaisa, te nau lava 'o 'ilo'i ko ho hinga, pea 'e tauhi ia 'i he loto falala mo'oni. 'Oku 'uhinga 'eni ke malu'i koe mei ha fa'ahinga mo'oni'i me'a 'e ngali fakatu'utamaki 'e lava ke fakatupu 'i hano fakamafola 'o e fakatotolo ko 'eni. 'E loka'i 'a e ngaahi fakamatala kotoa pe na'e tanaki 'i he komipiuta pe 'i ha kapineti 'oku loka'i 'i ha loki kuo loka'i. 'E toki lava pe ke ma'u ho fakamatala mei he tokotaha 'oku ha'ana e fakatotolo, 'enau kau supavaisa, pea moe tokotaha tokoni ki he fakatotolo.

'Oku mahu'inga ho'o totonu fakafo'ituitui pea te mau tauhi ke malu 'etau fakamatala kotoa pe tukukehe: kapau te ke talamai 'oku 'i ai ha fakatu'utamaki kiate koe, ni'ihi kehe, pe 'oku ke 'i ha tu'unga fakatu'utamaki mei ha taha kehe. 'Oku ha'isia 'a e tokotaha fakatotolo ki he lao 'o Nu'u Sila ke vahevahe 'a e fakamatala 'oku fekau'aki mo e maumau pe fakatu'utamaki 'oku tu'unuku mai.

Ko e ha e ngaahi fakamole 'o e kau 'i he fakatotolo ko 'eni?

'E fie ma'u koe 'i ho'o kau 'i he fakatotolo ko 'eni, ke ke tukupā ke fakahoko ha talanoa miniti 'e 90 kimu'a pea hili ha mahina 'e 3 ke toe talanoa iha kulupu fe'unga mo ha miniti 'e 90. Mahalo 'e fie ma'u ke fetu'utaki nounou atu e tokotaha 'oku ne fai e fakatotolo ki he talanoa fakafo'ituitui 'o kapau 'oku 'i ai ha'ane fehu'i fekau'aki mo ho'o talanoa.

Ko e hā ha faingamalie 'oku ou ma'u ke u fakakaukau'i ai 'a e fakaafe ko 'eni?

'Oku mahu'inga ke ke tuku ha taimi ke ke fakalaulauloto ai ki he kau 'i he fakatotolo ko 'eni. Kapau 'oku ke ongo'i ko e fakatotolo ko 'eni ko ha me'a 'oku ke fie kau ke tokoni ki ai pea hoko ko ha kongā 'oe fakatotolo ni, kataki 'o fetu'utaki ki he tokotaha fakatotolo 'i ha mahina 'e taha mei hono ma'u 'o e fakaafe ko 'eni.

Te u ma'u nai ha ngaahi fakamatala fekau'aki mo e ngaahi ola 'o e fakatotolo ko 'eni?

Kapau te ke fie ma'u ha fakamatala mei he fakatotolo ko 'eni ki ha fakamatala fakanounou 'o e ngaahi me'a 'oku ma'u, 'e 'oatu fakataha ia mo ha fehokotaki'anga (link) ki he 'esei koeni.

Ko e hā te u fai kapau 'oku 'iai ha me'a 'oku ou hoha'a ai ki he fakatotolo ko 'eni?

'Oku totonu ke talaatu ha fa'ahinga hoha'a fekau'aki mo e natula 'o e ngaue ni 'he vave taha ki he supavaisa ngaue,

Tokoni Palofesa 'Eli-Shadan tautolo, dan.tautolo@aut.ac.nz 921 9999 ext 7527

'Oku totonu ke fakaha 'a e ngaahi hoha'a fekau'aki mo e to'onga 'o e fakatotolo ki he sekelitali pule 'o e 'AUTEK,

Dr Carina Meares, ethics@aut.ac.nz, 921 9999 ext 6038.

Ko hai teu fetu'utaki ki ai ke ma'u ha fakamatala lahi ange fekau'aki mo e fekumi ko 'eni?

Kataki 'o tauhi 'a e la'ipepa fakamatala mo ha tatau 'o e foomu fakangofua ki ho ma'u'anga tokoni 'i he kaha'u. 'Oku lava foki ke ke fetu'utaki ki he timi fekumi 'o hange ko 'eni:

Ko hono fakaikiiki 'o e fetu'utaki ki he tokotaha fakatotolo:

Hilda Port: kavaevolution@gmail.com

Supavaisa ki he fetu'utaki 'a e pule ngaue:

Tokoni Palofesa 'Eli-Shadan Tautolo: dan.tautolo@aut.ac.nz pe koe fika 921 9999 ext 7527

Fakangofua 'e he 'Univesiti 'Okalani 'o e komiti ki he ngaahi 'ulungaanga faitotonu 'i he taife'i 'a e 'aho ne tali ai 'a e tali aofangatuku, 'e 'AUTEK fika fekumi, taife'i e fika fekumi. 14 Novema 2019 peesi 1 mei he 3 na'e fakatonutonu 'a e tatau ko 'eni 'i 'Epeleli 2019